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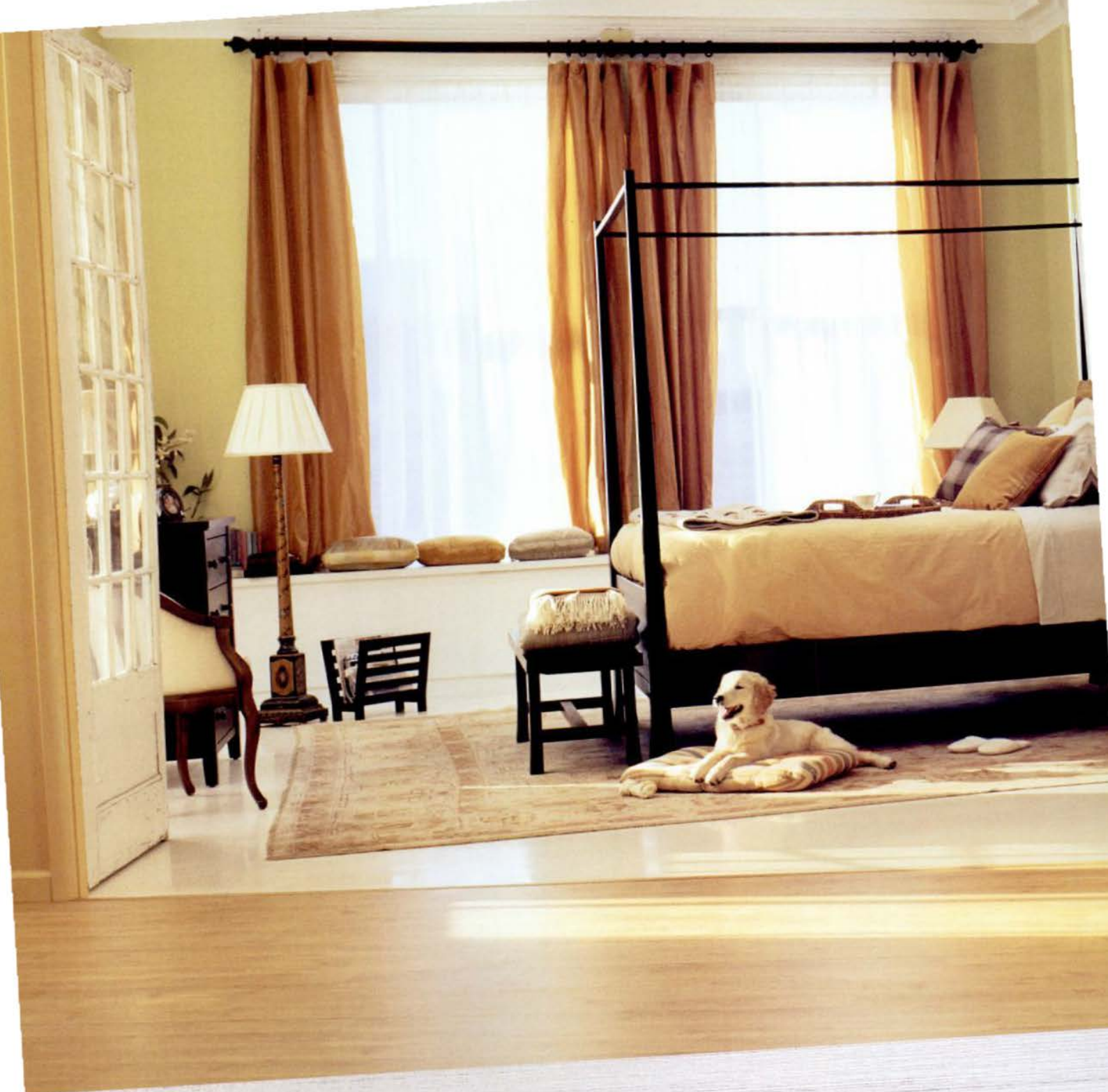

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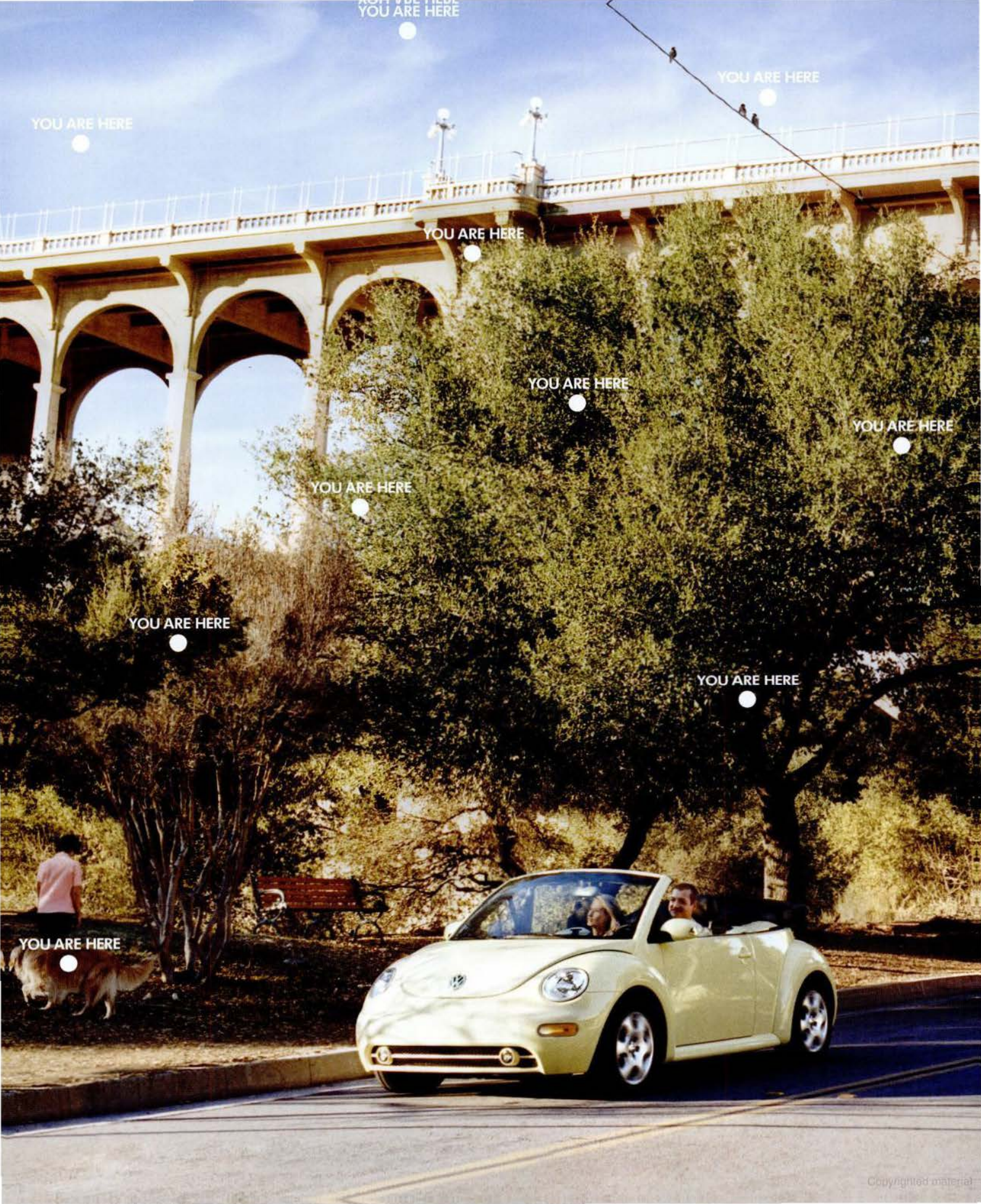

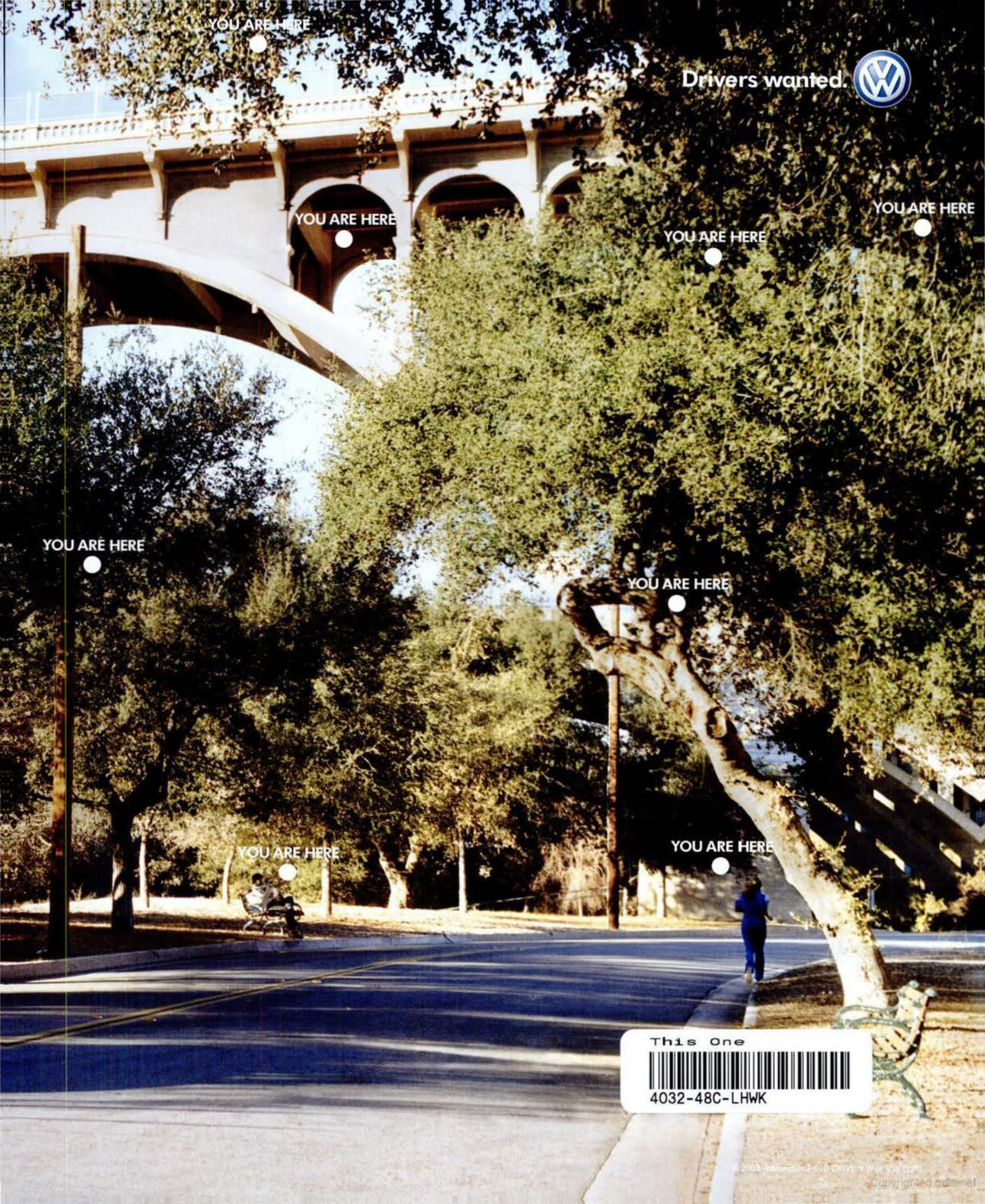

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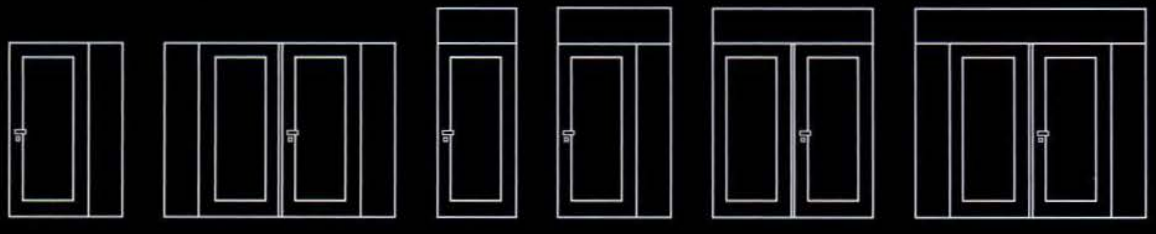

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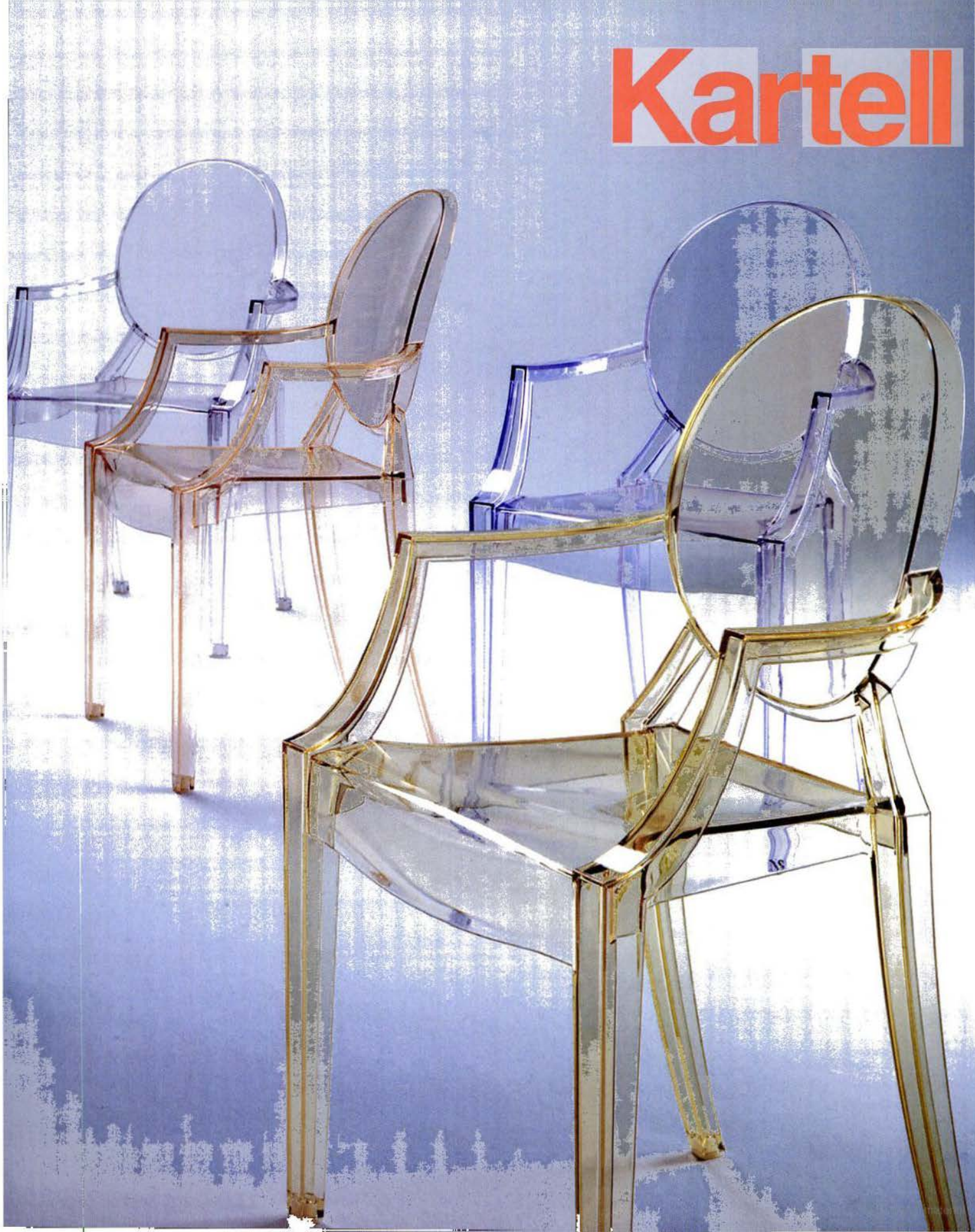
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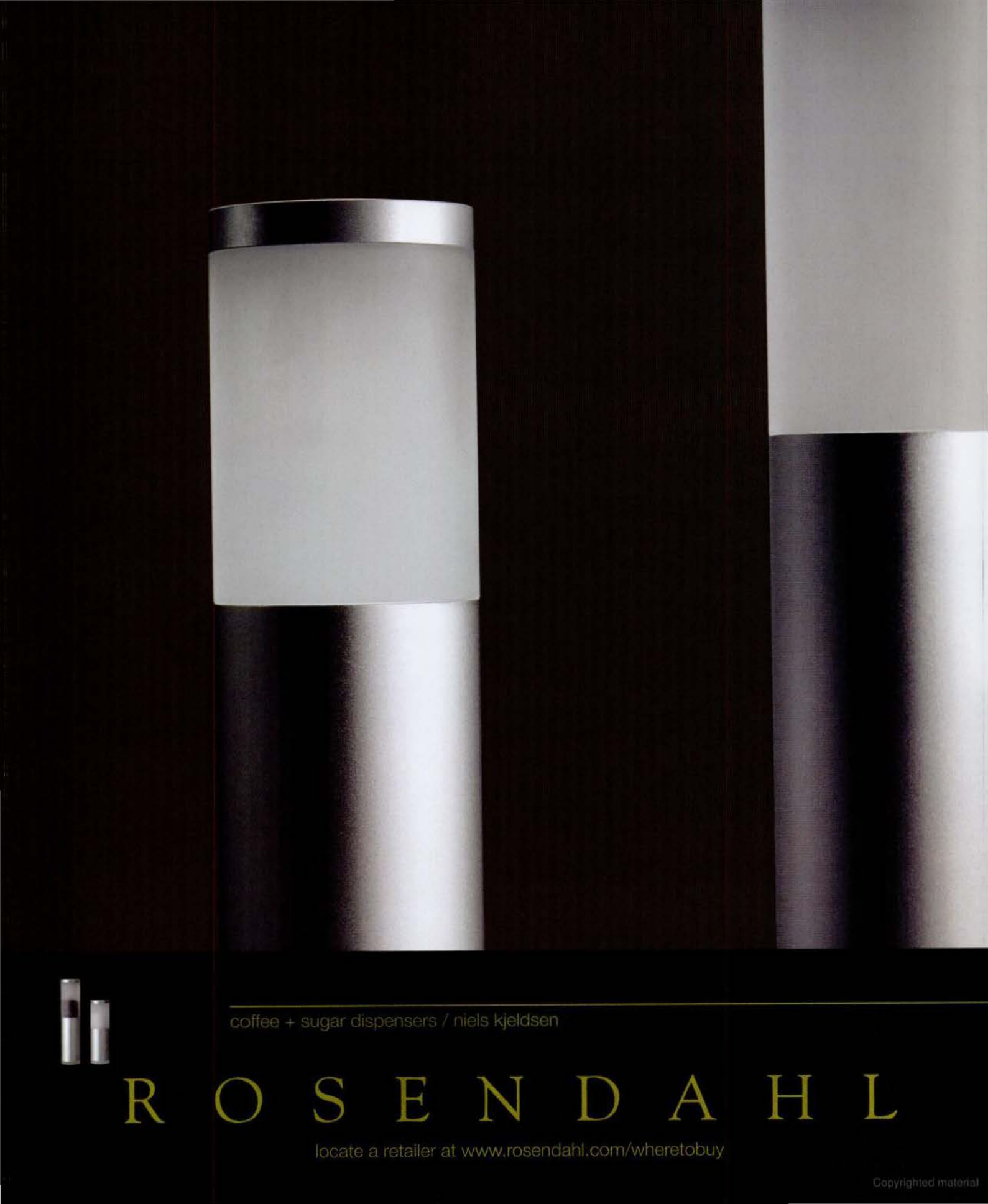

# dwell May 2003 Contents: Kitchens & Renovations



**Cover**
Architect Marie-Claude Hamelin (pictured) prepares dinner in the home she designed with partner Loukas Yiacouvakis. The kitchen took six months to complete, but the wait was worth it. **Photo by Christopher Wahl**

"New design ideas are constantly in demand, but the process of generating them can entail more time than society will sometimes be willing to wait. This makes the good designer's job that much more difficult."
—Mark Pollack, p. 114


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Before

After

**We were struggling with the idea of using ply-**wood siding for our Pacific Northwest home (above) and just couldn't reconcile ourselves with the idea of repainting every five years, when we stumbled onto an issue of Dwell and saw the numerous examples of great homes with sheet-metal siding. Needless to say, we went steel. Whenever we got a little nervous, voilà!, a new issue of Dwell would arrive. I could always count on finding at least one home with sheet-metal siding in the issue to keep our hopes up that we were doing the right thing. Fortunately, our architect (Charles Anderson) loved the idea, but had never successfully convinced a client to use it. So he was thrilled that we had come up with the idea on our own. Thanks to your inspiring houses, ours turned out great.

**Sally Bentley and John Benson**
Portland, Oregon

**I recently received the January/February 2003** issue of Dwell and was disappointed with the cover-to-cover (minus the ads and one page on city gardens) emphasis on, as one author called it, "exurban" architecture. I don't expect Dwell to turn its back on architecture that sits alone in a so-called natural landscape and eschews any neighbor one might be able to see from any window. That's the homeowner's prerogative (and Dwell's to show that aspect of the market). However, it is hypocritical to laud "nice modernists" who build infill and affordable housing within cities while at the same time displaying enticing, drool-worthy images of the quintessential [exurban] modernist dwelling.

And please don't pretend that these people are actually doing the environment a favor by building out in it instead of in an existing city or town. Yes, when Kevin Osborn and Rick Joy built that 2,200-square-foot house in the Sonora desert, they did much less damage than most builders have done in the past, and the house only minimally disturbs the habitat of local flora and fauna, but the plants and animals would have thrived all the more if no house had been built at all.

Perhaps in the future, Dwell could at least be a little more critical, or self-conscious, in its representation of this type of architecture, offering a viewpoint that brings to light the drawbacks as well as the allure of that big-house-on-the-prairie phenomenon.

**Naomi Sachs**
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**I want to join the revolution! I want to be part of** the world you envision because the one in which I live is inaccessible. I am a 56-year-old, wheelchair-using reader of Dwell. I was motivated to write after reading the evaluation criteria for the upcoming Dwell Home design contest and your Fruit Bowl Manifesto. Since the world you seek is a "modern world," could this new world not be one that is universally accessible? Could it not be usable by all people? If it is truly going to be a revolution you begin, bring along all the people and let's make some fruit salad. Perhaps you could consider including accessibility in your selection criteria—you might help get me in the front door!

**John R. Hudson**
Arlington, Virginia

**I am writing about the Gompertz tower ("Big** Dog. Big Sky.") in Montana that was featured in the January/February 2003 issue. One thing is certain, the photographs in your magazine made the home look interesting and thoughtful, and even gave a sense that the home actually ▸

## Congratulations!

Writer, photographer, and frequent Dwell contributor Camilo Jose Vergara was recently selected as a 2002 MacArthur Fellow. The grant (a $500,000 stipend to be paid over five years) will allow Vergara to continue his groundbreaking work documenting the ever-changing urban American landscape.


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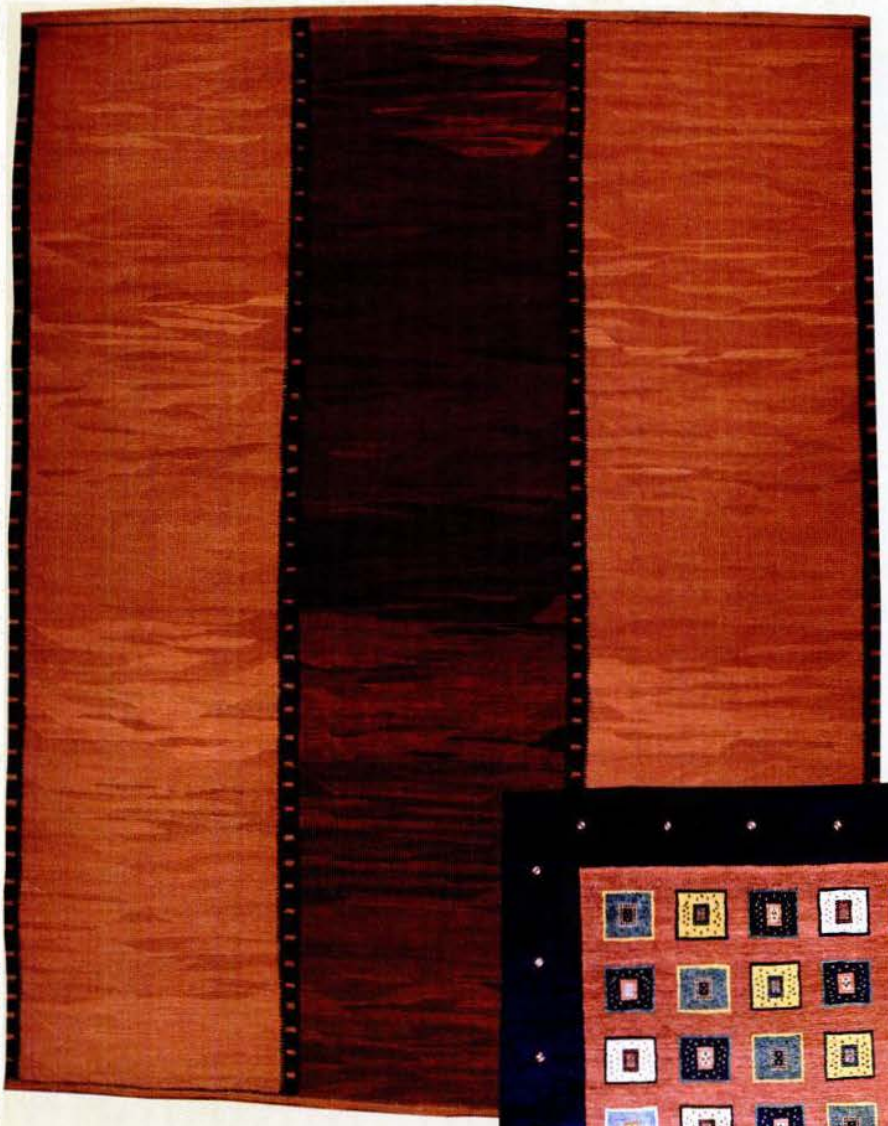

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## Contributors

**Raul Barreneche** ("A Loft in the Country," p. 72) is a frequent Dwell contributor. His book on tropical modern houses will be published by Universe/Rizzoli this fall.

**Lee Bey** ("An Upgrade From Coach," p. 100) is the former architecture critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He is currently working on a book about unbuilt architecture in Chicago.

**Mark Dery** ("Tomorrow Now," p. 102) writes about new media, fringe thought, and unpopular culture. His most recent book is *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium: American Culture on the Brink*.

Photographer **Erica Freudenstein** ("All About the Angles," p. 86) wanted to be an industrial designer until she found out it meant having to do calculus. Her work has been featured in *Metropolis*, the *Washington Post Magazine*, and *Teen People*.

**Alexei Hay** ("A Loft in the Country," p. 72) assisted photographers Jason Schmidt and Philip Lorca DiCorcia before going out on his own. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Dutch*, *ID*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, among others.

**Nancy Levinson** ("Less Stuff = More Space," p. 98) is an editor at Princeton Architectural Press.

**Zohar Lazar's** ("Tomorrow Now," p. 102) work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *Texas Monthly*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Time*, and other publications.

Photographer **Christopher Wahl** ("Maison d'Être," p. 80) is a self-described crappy skateboarder who enjoys barbecues and corduroys. Highlights of late include working with the Rolling Stones.

**Susan Yelavich** ("Textiles 101," p. 112) is co-curator of the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's 2003 design triennial. She is working on a major survey of contemporary world interiors for Phaidon Publisher.

blends in with the surroundings. But the view from the river is much different. I lead trips on the Yellowstone River during the summer, and when I pass the Gompertz tower my heart painfully skips a beat. The home stands awkwardly on the shore, unsure of its place in this beautiful valley. It drives your attention away from the river, and then becomes a sore on the mountains it stands in front of. It would be unfortunate to see more homes try to make this "relationship with the sky" if this is the outcome.

**Bryan Steelman**
Red Lodge, Montana

**I just wanted to tell you how excited I am about** the Dwell Home competition. It's about time. In the past year, I have also been working on the design of a modular home. Tentatively dubbed "The Olive House" (it'll go great with a martini), our design is based on the mid-century classics. We'll begin our engineering phase within the next several months. What I find so amazing is the number of individuals dedicating themselves to this way of thinking, especially in Europe. Architecture and design are beginning to turn a corner toward accessibility, and I applaud your efforts and leadership.

**David Robb**
Phoenix, Arizona

**I could not have been more excited to read your** editorial in the January/February 2003 issue, "I've Got an Idea." For years, I have been obsessed with the Case Study House program, particularly Pierre Koenig's Stahl House. I suspect that I am one among many who consider this house the holy grail of residential architecture. I can't wait to see the results of the Dwell Home competition.

P.S. Does Dwell want to build a modernist house in coastal Maine? Just wondering . . .

**Lisa Marshall**
Cape Elizabeth, Maine

**Your magazine's decision to run the prefab home** competition as "invitation only" seems incongruous with the inherently populist notion of affordable housing. I fear that this decision, and the tone of the competition as a whole, may be indicative of a repetition of a historical mistake. I have long been smitten by the Case Study houses, and agree that the contributions to that experiment are seminal works of design. Yet, I can't help but think that the status of these buildings as architectural curiosities is itself incriminating and indicative of failure.

An implicit legacy of the Case Study experiment appears to be carried through to your ►

**Coming in June:**
Furniture! A great overview of designers, producers, manufacturers, stores, and showrooms. Fantastic furniture in beautiful homes in Paris, Rome, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Plus: a special report from the Stockholm Furniture Fair, tiny appliances, geothermal energy, and hypersonic sound.


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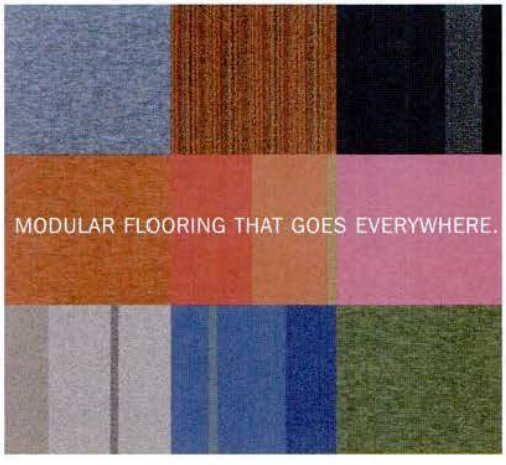


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Dwell Home competition: the inherently suburban/exurban spin of the problem. From my seat in center city Philadelphia, I see the problem of housing to be intertwined with that of the viability of cities and suburbs together. The $175,000 model you plan to build on "a scenic site . . . just outside of Chapel Hill" smells of the sort of utopian sentiment that characterizes modernism at its most beautiful and most useless. I beg you to build another house in addition to the one in North Carolina: choose an urban infill site in one of a thousand blighted American city neighborhoods.

I've bought into Dwell's "nice modernist" sensibility, its desire to recognize design as a viable element of modern living, and the housing experiment strikes me as a unique opportunity to apply this sensibility into a valuable contribution. I look forward to the results with a mixture of anticipation and suspicion.

**Alberto Cavallero, AIA**
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Both Janice Steinhardt ("Not Quite New York")** and Richard Davignon ("Behind the Bungalow"), featured in your September/October 2002 issue, shared a dilemma faced by many modernists: They like the density, mix of land uses, and pedestrian-friendliness of traditional neighborhoods, they just don't like traditional architecture. But if you're going to build in an old neighborhood, you've got to recognize whose shoulders you're standing on. Most of these now-desirable communities would be long gone but for the urban pioneers and preservationists who headed, against the tide, back to the city decades ago. Having battled the bulldozers, few of these veteran activists are inclined toward passivity when the design of a new building presents a similar threat to neighborhood character.

I dig modernism, and it's fun to occasionally read about a home that riles the neighbors. But your too-frequent modernist-as-iconoclast theme can sound a little self-congratulatory. "Nice" modernism has room for humility, community-mindedness, and contextualism. Charles Eames's oft-quoted dictum applies well here, too: "Design depends largely on constraints."

**Tim Netsch**
Nashville, Tennessee

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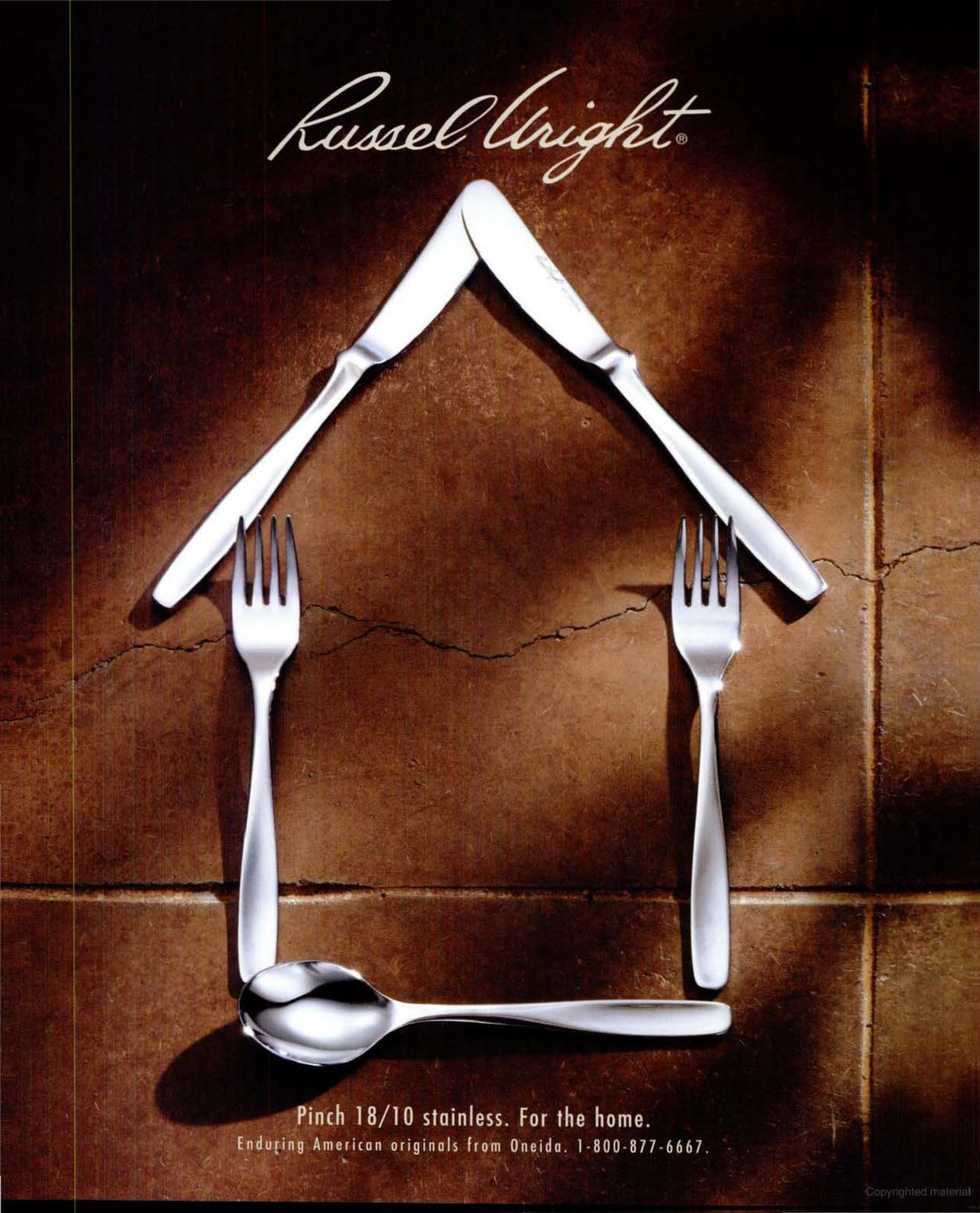

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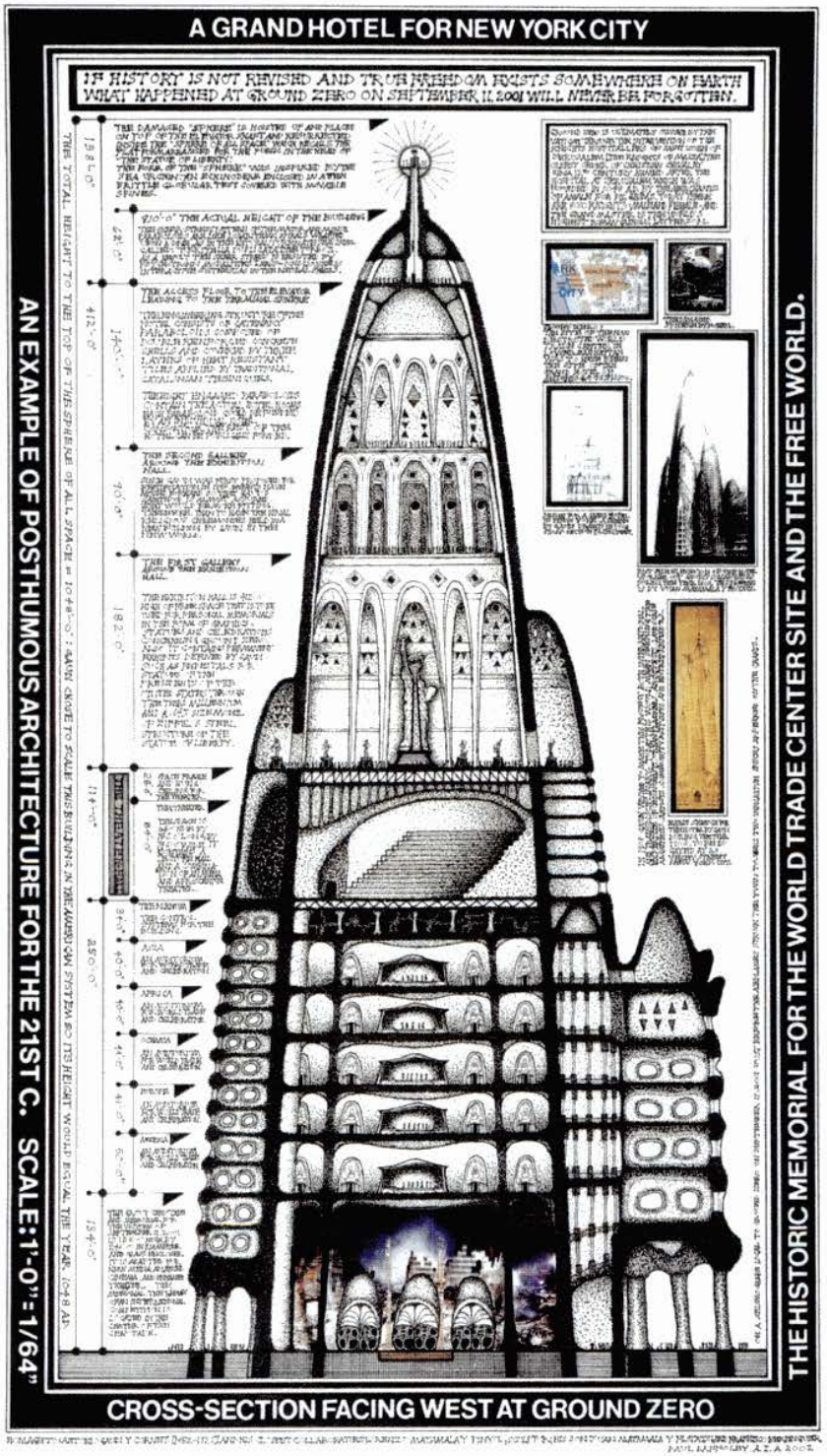
# The Biggest Renovation of Them All?




DRAWING COURTESY OF PAUL LAFFOLEY / KENT GALLERY, NY, 2002

It's as if Gaudí somehow knew lower Manhattan was going to need this building in the future. Today, two different entities—an artists' group from Barcelona and Boston architect Paul Laffoley—are lobbying to make the 1,048-feet tall Gaudí project a contender for the WTC site.

**Call me idealistic or even naïve, but is there a more** appealing option out there for the World Trade Center site than the skyscraper Antonio Gaudí designed in 1908? The iconoclastic Spanish architect's creation, which he dubbed the Hotel Attraction, called for a curvy and colorful cluster of steel-and-concrete parabolic towers located at varying heights around a central tower. Inside the main tower Gaudí intended to commemorate each American president, leaving enough room to do so until the year 3000. A contemporary realization of this element could memorialize the 2,800 victims of the September 11 tragedy instead.

Nostalgic? Maybe. But the competition for new proposals has been so fraught with ideology and ego that a little sentimentality seems an appropriate response.

When the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation scrapped its original efforts and instead sought the contributions of nine teams of crackerjack architects, I was hopeful. It felt like a wonderful opportunity to make architecture and its purpose part of the larger social and cultural conversation. And it did, but not in the way one would have hoped. To wit: I've heard a disheartening suggestion that the World Trade Center design competition was dreamed up by New York developers to discredit the architectural profession. By giving this esteemed group the "freedom" to create a plan for lower Manhattan, they could count on the architects to blow it and shoot themselves in the feet. Frank Gehry's now infamous dismissal of the design competition because of its too paltry remuneration of $40,000 only supports the conjecture.

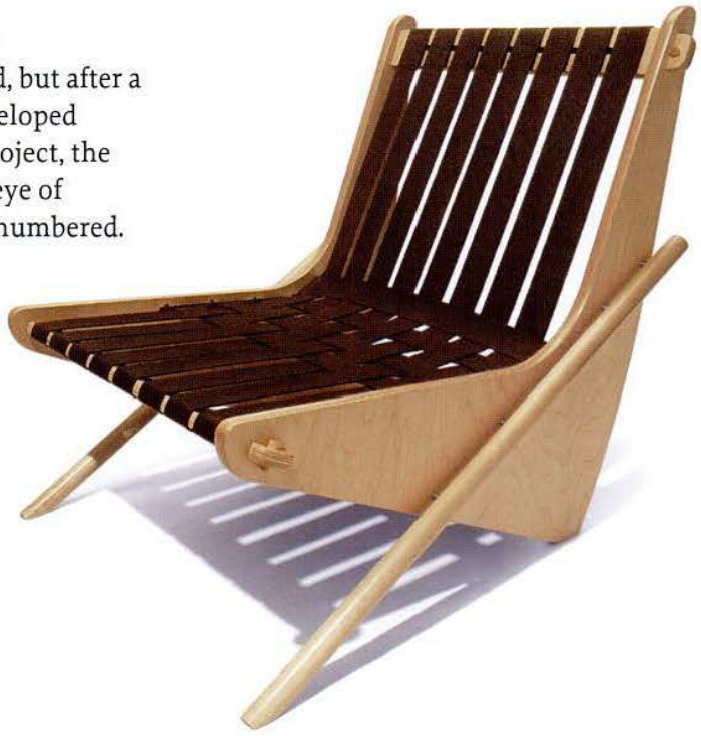
Gaudí once said, "men are divided into two categories: men of words and men of action. The former talk, the latter act. I belong to the second group. I lack the means of expressing myself. I could not tell you about the concept of art. I need to give it a concrete form. I have never had time to question myself. I have spent my time working. Like everything human, I am incomplete. . . ."

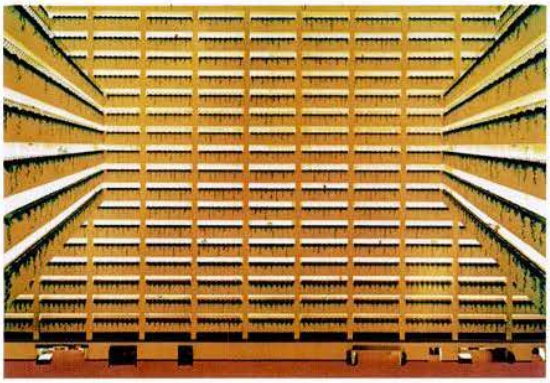
This type of reflection—humility, even—is nowhere in evidence at a time, and on a site, that calls for it. Perhaps what is most appealing about Gaudí's posthumous entry is the very fact of its being created outside of context, apart from politics and leasable square-footage requirements. I don't want to overromanticize his effort, but I can't help but think it has visceral and emotive qualities lacking in the bulk of the alternatives.

The designer George Nelson wrote that "design is not science and it never will be, for the simple reason that science deals with process . . . while design deals with human activity and you can't predict that." In this situation overflowing with the unpredictability of human activity, perhaps the problem with the WTC process is, in fact, process itself.

What is so remarkable about Gaudí's works is the unmitigated sense of wonder and potential they impart to those who experience them. Yes, I know that buildings in lower Manhattan need to generate income; I just hope that something of the plan that results from all of this will also produce a little joy. —*allison@dwellmag.com*

**Boomerang Chair** / By Richard Neutra / House Industries
Do boomerangs always come back? The Nerf one never did, but after a long wait, Neutra's 1942 Boomerang chair finally has. Developed for the San Pedro, California, Channel Heights housing project, the chair has been faithfully reproduced under the watchful eye of Neutra's son, Dion. The first edition of 100 are signed and numbered. www.houseind.com





**Andreas Gursky** / 15 Feb–1 June / SFMOMA / San Francisco, CA / Taking in a Gursky photograph is like shopping at Costco: Everything seems normal, until a package of 72 toilet paper rolls in your shopping cart makes you think twice. Gursky's epic images of contemporary trappings—hotel lobbies, stock exchanges, raves, and Prada boutiques—trigger similar feelings of familiarity and disbelief. www.sfmoma.org

**Field Lamps** / By Jeff Taylor
Do the residents of Manhattan mull over Con Edison's capillaries? Probably more often than you'd think, since the vital underground system so often comes into view on evenings when men in hard hats conduct steaming street vivisections. If you're into pipes, you might like Taylor's lamps, which strongly evoke them. Minimally ornamented with plastic sculpted striations of bright and muted lumens, with floor and ceiling models in a variety of sizes (from 18 to 36 inches), they're a sturdy way to make your room just moody enough. burdenofdreams@hotmail.com

**Christian Marclay** / 31 May–31 Aug / UCLA Hammer Museum / Los Angeles, CA
Christian Marclay is clearly smitten with sound. A visual artist and composer by day and dadaist DJ by night (he's worked with Sonic Youth and the Kronos Quartet), Marclay translates music into intensely imagined sculptural and new media works. This exhibition surveys the past 20 years of Marclay's prolific art production. Don't miss *Tape Fall*, a reel-to-reel player that continuously streams magnetic tape while playing a recording of dripping water, or *Virtuoso*, a 25-foot-long accordion—it's sound as you've never seen it before. www.hammer.ucla.edu

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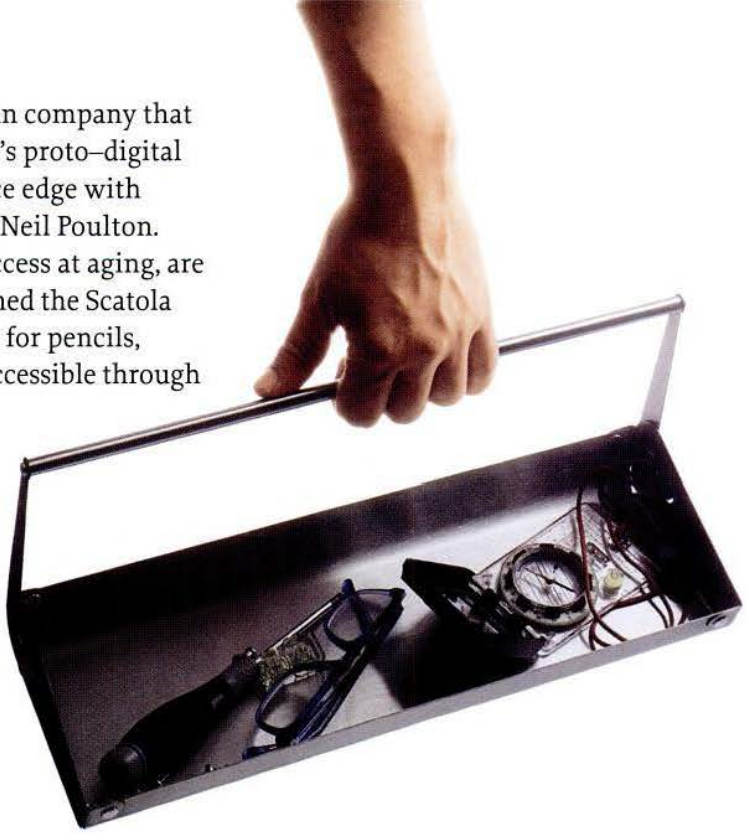
**Scatola Modellista** / By Enzo Mari / Danese, the Italian company that acquired fame in the '60s with designs like Enzo Mari's proto–digital aesthetic Formosa wall calendar, has lately kept a nice edge with new work from Brits and Scots like James Irvine and Neil Poulton. Meanwhile, Danese's Italians, with characteristic success at aging, are still going strong. Now, at age 72, Enzo Mari has designed the Scatola Modellista, or model-maker's box—the perfect vessel for pencils, pills, or paraphernalia. Danese's products are newly accessible through the U.S. distributor Global Tools. Tel: 201-963-8577



**Materialism**
Cashmere used to be the mainstay for delicate women in '50s twinsets, carefully dressed for a date at the drive-in. Sudden downpours would prove disastrous if one was caught without an umbrella or the coat of a chivalrous man. Though carhops no longer serve courting couples, cashmere continues its reign in some social sets. Designers Lutz & Patmos, with Yves Behar, have bucked the *Town & Country* trend to create a stylish water-resistant cashmere windbreaker. With a new technique that chemically treats every single wooly fiber with Teflon, the resulting fabric looks and feels just like the original—but holds up in bad weather. www.lutzandpatmos.com

**Rewind: Forty Years of Design and Advertising** / By Jeremy Myerson and Graham Vickers / Phaidon / $75
In the 1960s, the British Design & Art Direction association (D&AD) introduced their famous "Yellow Pencil" awards for international creative excellence, raising the bar to usher in a half-century of high-quality ads. With hundreds of designs from Lou Klein to Tibor Kalman to Saatchi & Saatchi, this hulking book is more attainable, just as fun, and still less heavy than the 40 years of D&AD annuals that it surveys. Here's a chance to revel in design's impact on advertising—the unique world whose "mythical reputation" the authors celebrate as "simultaneously the province of the snake-oil salesman and the sophisticated social analyst." www.phaidon.com


**IKEA Conundrum**
The fate of famed architect Marcel Breuer's long-vacant Pirelli Building in New Haven, Connecticut, has been in limbo since IKEA bought both the land and existing building in the late 1990s and announced its plans to erect a big-box store on the site. Alas, the lovely L-shaped Pirelli work—a tower placed asymmetrically over a long, two-story building and adjacent warehouse—was slated to be leveled to make way for a parking garage. But IKEA's designs were foiled when New Haven's mayor stepped in to stop demolition. Under the encouragement of the local Long Wharf Advocacy Group (a temporary organization established in light of the unfolding preservationist crisis), pressure is mounting from local architecture enthusiasts to save the historic building. Faced with relentless protest, IKEA has agreed to keep the tower but destroy the warehouse and two-story base. Breuer advocates argue that this would completely ruin the integrity of Breuer's design. The conundrum: Is it really so important to be able to park near the latest in mass-designed Swedish décor, or could IKEA consumers instead take the bus, thus preserving a modernist architectural icon?

PHOTO BY ROBERT MARRACCI (PIRELLI BUILDING)

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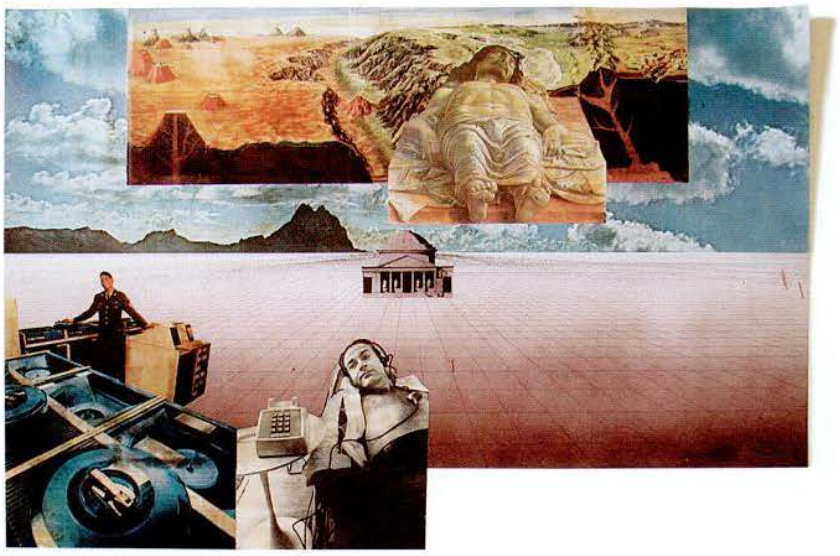
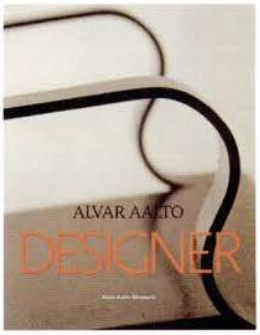
**Superstudio: Life Without Objects** / 1 Mar–8 June / Design Museum / London, England
It was no picnic when '60s technocratic urbanization brought high-speed smut into old-world European cities such as, say, Florence. Even the city's younger generation was prone to idealistic planning—after all, the Renaissance had made their town a petri dish for it. So when mid-century realities soiled and soured the piazzas, Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia rebelled by forming Superstudio. When confronted by their dreamy counter-utopia collages, try to fight off drooling hypnosis. www.designmuseum.org

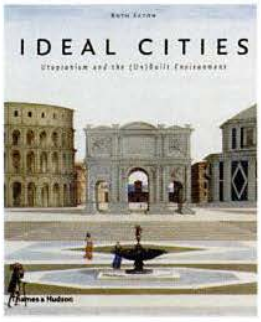


**Marmoleum** / Forbo Linoleum
Linoleum was born with the moon in Gemini. Troubled with schizophrenia, it often rolls into the world as a noxious form of chemically processed petroleum called vinyl. But that isn't the real linoleum, and it really never was. At Forbo Linoleum, they're especially proud of their durable Marmoleum floor covering. The smooth stuff is made from linseed oil pressed from flax, wood flour from timber grown in controlled forests where every tree felled is replaced, and pine rosins, backed with natural jute fibers. You could almost eat the stuff! You can design it how you like, with over 150 colors to choose from. www.themarmoleumstore.com

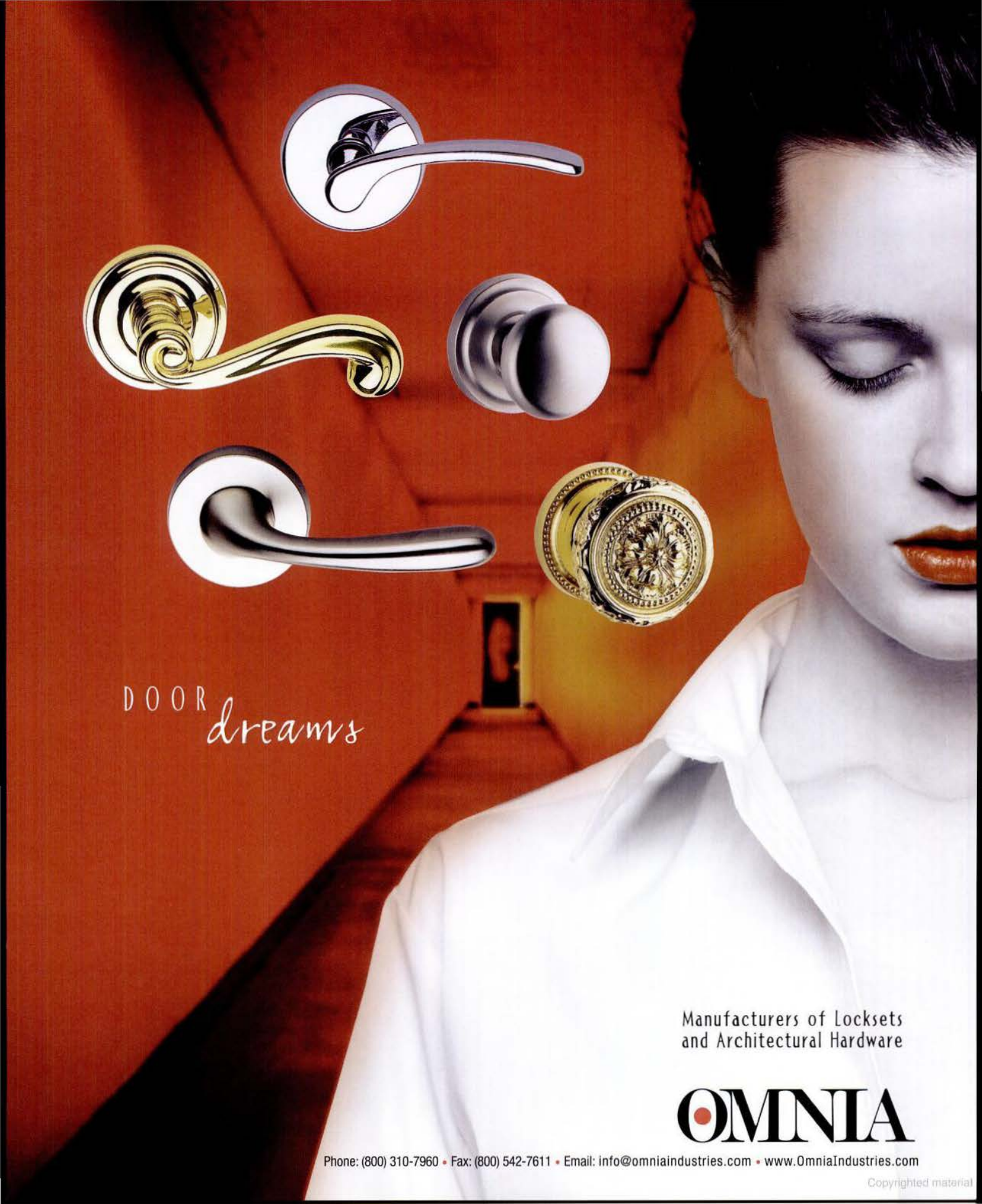
**The Art of Structural Design: A Swiss Legacy** / 8 Mar–15 June / Princeton University Art Museum / Princeton, NJ
The span of a suspension bridge became an icon of the 20th century, and as the 21st graces us with the likes of Calatrava and Herzog + de Meuron, parallel steel parabolas maintain every ounce of their integrity. Next time you cruise over the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, think of its designer, Othmar Ammann, who was among a handful of Zurich-trained engineering heroes. Ammann, Robert Maillart, and Christian Menn will be among those featured. www.princetonartmuseum.org

**Alvar Aalto Designer** / Edited by Pirkko Tuukkanen / Alvar Aalto Foundation / $50
Alvar Aalto's output is distinguished from the sometimes heartless modernism of his contemporaries by a proletarian friendliness. His designs seem elegant while being intended for the common man, as evinced by the IKEA-like Artek store that produced his work. Much has been made of his architecture, but here the focus is on Aalto as industrial designer. A complete catalog of his furnishings, lighting, and glassware is accompanied by essays on his role as a "master of variation."



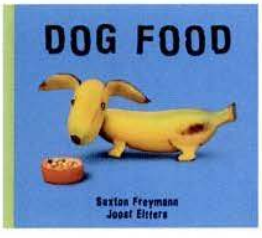




**Ideal Cities: Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment** / By Ruth Eaton / Thames & Hudson / $60
As renowned historian of cities Lewis Mumford wrote, "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at." In this book, Eaton presents a historical timeline of past and present envisionings of the perfect city, from detailed Renaissance plans to new millennium metropolises, and examines the dystopian leanings of these utopian-seeming ideas. Accompanied by gorgeous full-color plates and the work of such luminaries as da Vinci, Le Corbusier, Neutra, and Soleri.



**Somewhere Better Than This Place: Alternative Social Experience in the Spaces of Contemporary Art** / 31 May–9 Nov / Contemporary Arts Center / Cincinnati, OH / Though the title smacks of pomo posturing (or David Byrne's latest), this exhibition is an ambitious and interesting inaugural show for the museum's new building by Zaha Hadid. The Japanese graphic design collaborative Groovisions, Puerto Rican installation artist Pepón Osorio, and Belgian performance artist Francis Alÿs are among the international roster of 39 contemporary artists who will examine the juxtapositions between society, place, and art. www.contemporaryartscenter.org

**Dog Food** / By Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers / Arthur A. Levine / $12.95




Elffers and Freymann have built a mini-empire around playing with food. Armed with an X-Acto knife and inspiration, this duo has become well known for sculpting a motley crew of vegetables and fruit into food with attitude, then photographing the edible art. In this book, the authors take on the canine world, imbuing items from the produce bin with a full range of doggy likenesses. From a quizzical cauliflower poodle to a serene banana dachshund, it's an "aww, how cute" vision of everyday produce.

**Bolle** / By Tapio Wirkkala / Venini

Admiring the simplistic sophistication of Bolle, it's hard to imagine it was created by the rugged Tapio Wirkkala, who looks more the part of wind-weathered fisherman. Throughout his life, Wirkkala maintained a delicate balance between international design superstardom and snowbound isolation in his native Finland. The latter provided inspiration for many of his designs (such as the roughly hewn, icy-glass Finlandia Vodka bottle). Arriving with the Murano glassblowers at four each morning, Wirkkala earned the workers' respect, which in turn allowed him to fashion, with their help, these alluringly complex designs. www.venini.it

**New Museums**

This spring is a great time to check out some new museum architecture in the U.S.A. Smack in the center of Cincinnati, Ohio, the new Contemporary Arts Center, designed by Zaha Hadid, opens on May 31. Our country's first art museum to be solely designed by a woman, the glass, steel, and naked concrete edifice will boast what Hadid calls an "urban carpet," a visual mechanism that draws the sidewalk grid inside the main entry. In Fort Worth, Texas, Tadao Ando's new Modern Art Museum (above) opened last December, but now's the first chance to sniff the flowers in its meticulously cared-for park setting. Rhythm-savvy Israeli architect Moshe Safdie is building a red-and-gray addition to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, which will open this June. Architects OpenOffice and artist Robert Irwin are turning a historic printing mill into Dia Art Foundation's new museum (to be named Dia: Beacon) on the Hudson, in Dutchess County, New York; it opens in May. And Gae Aulenti, who specializes in "museification" of old landmarks (think the d'Orsay), has transformed San Francisco's Beaux Arts former main library into the new Asian Art Museum, which opened in March.

## Events

**Scandinavian Furniture Fair**
7–11 May
Copenhagen, Denmark
www.scandinavianfurniturefair.com

**Art Chicago 2003**
9–12 May
Chicago, IL
www.artchicago.com

**International Contemporary Furniture Fair**
17–20 May
New York, NY
www.icff.com

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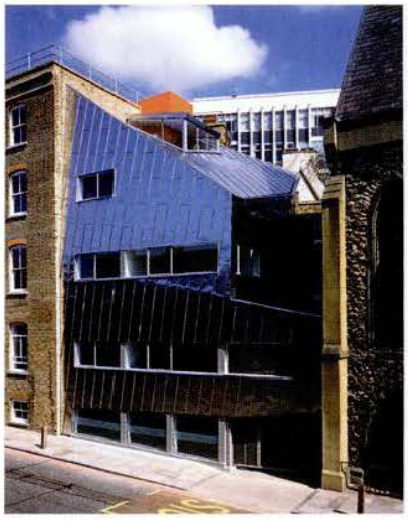
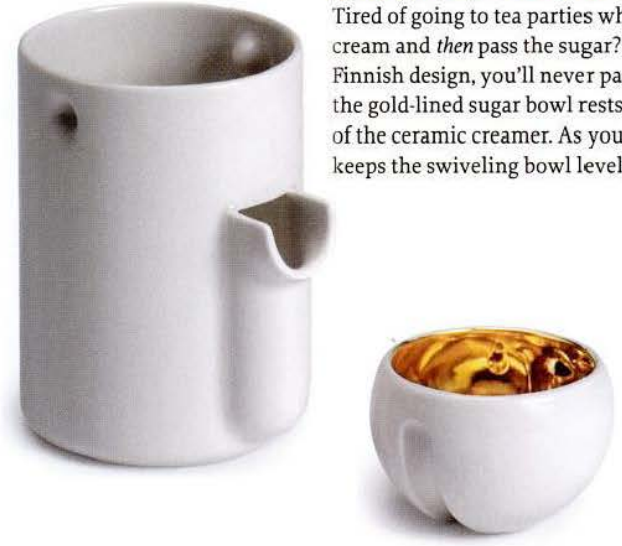
**Personal Valet Clothes Vitalizing System** / By Whirlpool / Are your clothes always wrinkled? Does the dry cleaner sometimes seem just too far away? With Whirlpool's Personal Valet clothes vitalizing system, you'll never need to leave the house rumpled or smelly again. In about 30 minutes, the Personal Valet will whisk away the traces of cigarette smoke from your suede coat and remove all creases from your pants. Just like your very own Jeeves—minus the British wit. www.personalvalet.com

**Super Structure**
The British architectural firm Satellite finished this project in London's King's Cross area last summer. Named "The Cross," the jagged metallic structure houses offices. The daintily scaled building fearlessly contrasts with the neighboring Welsh church. Though architectural metal wraps have been around for decades, it's rare for so much stainless steel to abut stones and mortar that predate it by so many centuries. The roof's dramatic slope allows light to flow through the church's stained glass. Who knows, maybe the shiny surface blasts an extra reflection through Mary's vitreous halo. www.satellitedesignworkshop.co.uk



**Glo Mirror** / By Bart Design
The invention of glow-in-the-dark stars was really good for business at the National Air and Space Museum gift shop, and was instrumental to the survival of the Star Magic store on Broadway at 8th Street. Back in the '80s, those little green stickum friends shone brightest in windowless rooms, a trait that often landed them on bathroom walls. Does the Glo mirror speak to this nostalgia? Possibly, but it also serves a fundamental function as it emanates silent nocturnal phosphorescence that is somehow as calm and otherworldly as a submarine murmur. www.bartdesign.it



**Newton Milk and Sugar Set** / Tonfisk Design
Tired of going to tea parties where you have to pass the cream and *then* pass the sugar? Thanks to this clever Finnish design, you'll never pass them separately again—the gold-lined sugar bowl rests suspended at the top of the ceramic creamer. As you pour, the magic of gravity keeps the swiveling bowl level. www.tonfisk-design.fi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# Cuckoo for Corian

Corian may play the lead role in the Grays' loft, but additions like the Eames Aluminum Group chairs and Coco the Bassett Hound add a homey touch. Top right: Behind Corian-coated door number one: the bedroom. Bottom right: Rachael, Nicholas, and Coco enjoy breakfast in the sun-filled kitchen.

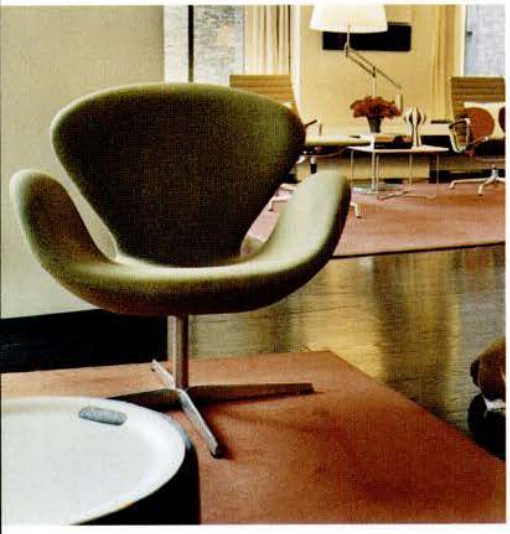
**Look up in Manhattan's Garment District, and you'll** see a warren of densely packed sweatshops, where 60,000 people work elbow-to-elbow, among whirring machines and mountains of fabric. Floating in the middle of this landscape of scraps, steam, and sweat, however, is an unexpectedly serene space—cool, uncluttered, and clean to an extreme. "Hypoallergenic" is, admittedly, an odd quality to highlight in a home, but it's an undeniable feature of Rachael and Nicholas Gray's 4,000-square-foot loft, located on the 11th floor of a 16-story building once devoted to manufacturing, though now one of the few with residential units on the street. Designed by Rachael, an architect and principal of her own firm, Work, the Gray residence is an exposition of Corian, a material celebrated for being nonporous, highly resistant to stains, homogenous, and, yes, hypoallergenic. Since its invention by DuPont in the 1960s, the solid acrylic has been a signature feature of deluxe kitchens and bathrooms. Gradually, however, Corian's hygienic properties have ushered it into other environments, such as operating rooms, hospital showers, and professional kitchens.

In the Grays' loft, Corian has migrated farther still, to every corner of the home. It is used as walls, benches, cabinet doors, shelving, bathroom walls, steps, cutting boards, tabletops, custom sinks—everything, ironically, but the kitchen counters with which it is still primarily associated. The bender began with the architect's quest for a material that would function well both indoors and out. Despite being situated midblock, the loft boasts 23 windows and—the rarest of amenities in Manhattan—two terraces. A connection to outside is the space's most striking feature, and something Rachael wanted to accentuate as much as possible. To start, she decided to keep the perimeter free by creating a "private zone," situated in the middle of the loft, containing three bedrooms, four baths, and storage. This block is fronted by an ►

## How to Make My House Your House

Rachael maintains a clean aesthetic by minimizing the need for or visibility of hardware. Drapes appear throughout the loft as window coverings, space dividers, and closet screens. The hairy, cream-colored drapes in the entry area and behind the seating area (on the southern wall) are made by Malatesta and Company and the fabric is from Larsen. The lamp is by Sugatsune. www.sugatsune.com

In the Grays' home, many of the vertical surfaces stop short of the floor, leaving a half-inch reveal that gives the illusion of walls floating. Choosing furniture with light bases and lifting fixtures and objects off the floor (for example, the floating television and wall-mounted sconces) have a similar effect, allowing the floor to flow visually through-out the space. Television by Fujitsu. www.fujitsu.com



Rooms are defined by rugs and furniture classics, like the Swan chair by Arne Jacobsen, Eames Aluminum Group chairs, and Jasper Morrison side table, in the otherwise overwhelmingly open loft. Most of the furniture is available through websites such as www.themagazine.org, www.dwr.com, or www.knoll.com.

The area rugs are actually low-pile wall-to-wall carpeting, cut to size (Rachael specified irregular trapezoids) and bound; Rachael bought hers at ABC Carpet & Home, but any stock carpet can be made more interesting by customizing its shape. www.abchome.com

L-shaped wall that runs the entire length of the loft and extends outward, to the terrace beyond. She chose Corian for the surface, because, she explains, "Few materials that can weather well outside actually look appropriate indoors. Despite what people say about materials like slate or concrete, they can look misplaced when used as interior walls."

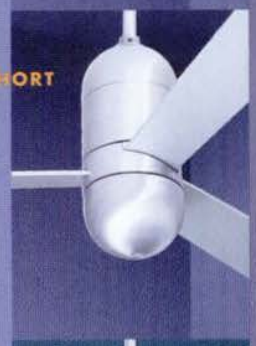
The result is a monolithic, milky-white plane that moves seamlessly from indoors to out, masking the complexity of the spaces behind it. This gesture triggered Rachael's approach to the rest of the loft. Given her husband's and her dog's propensity to "bang around a lot," as well as her intense dislike for clutter, Corian seemed like the perfect housekeeping accomplice. Her cleverness with the material matches the intelligence with which she organized the spaces. Taking advantage of Corian's malleability—it cuts like butter, bonds to any surface, and can be thermoformed into unique shapes—Rachael had almost everything, from shelves to cabinets to drawers, custom-built. This means there's a place for everything. "We've always been fairly minimal," says Rachael, "but before the renovation, our place was more traditional, with carved-up rooms and a lot of furniture, which somehow allows you to have more stuff lying around." Nicholas, proprietor of Gray's Papaya, the landmark New York hot dog chain, is particularly pleased with his home office, an elevated nook with a bright green desktop and fully flush white cabinets that hide all evidence of work.

Rachael's application of Corian was highly strategic throughout. She used it in places that would endure a lot of abuse, such as the foyer wall and shelf, and for the kitchen tables and a low, floating bench that wraps two sides of the loft, continuing outside to a sitting area on the terrace. The bench hides storage drawers, as well as radiators. The master bath, however, is where Corian's versatility is most evident. It's used as the surround for the shower and bath, eliminating the need for grout and the presence of a distracting grid pattern. Pale green Corian panels are bonded to the bathroom walls, giving them a translucent quality. A pair of custom cube-shaped Corian sinks sit on a bright orange Corian counter, which continues into the glass-enclosed shower as a shelf. Nicholas likes to call the master bath their "panic room," noting, "It's a place you go when you want to escape. When you're in here, you feel like you're in the center of the world."

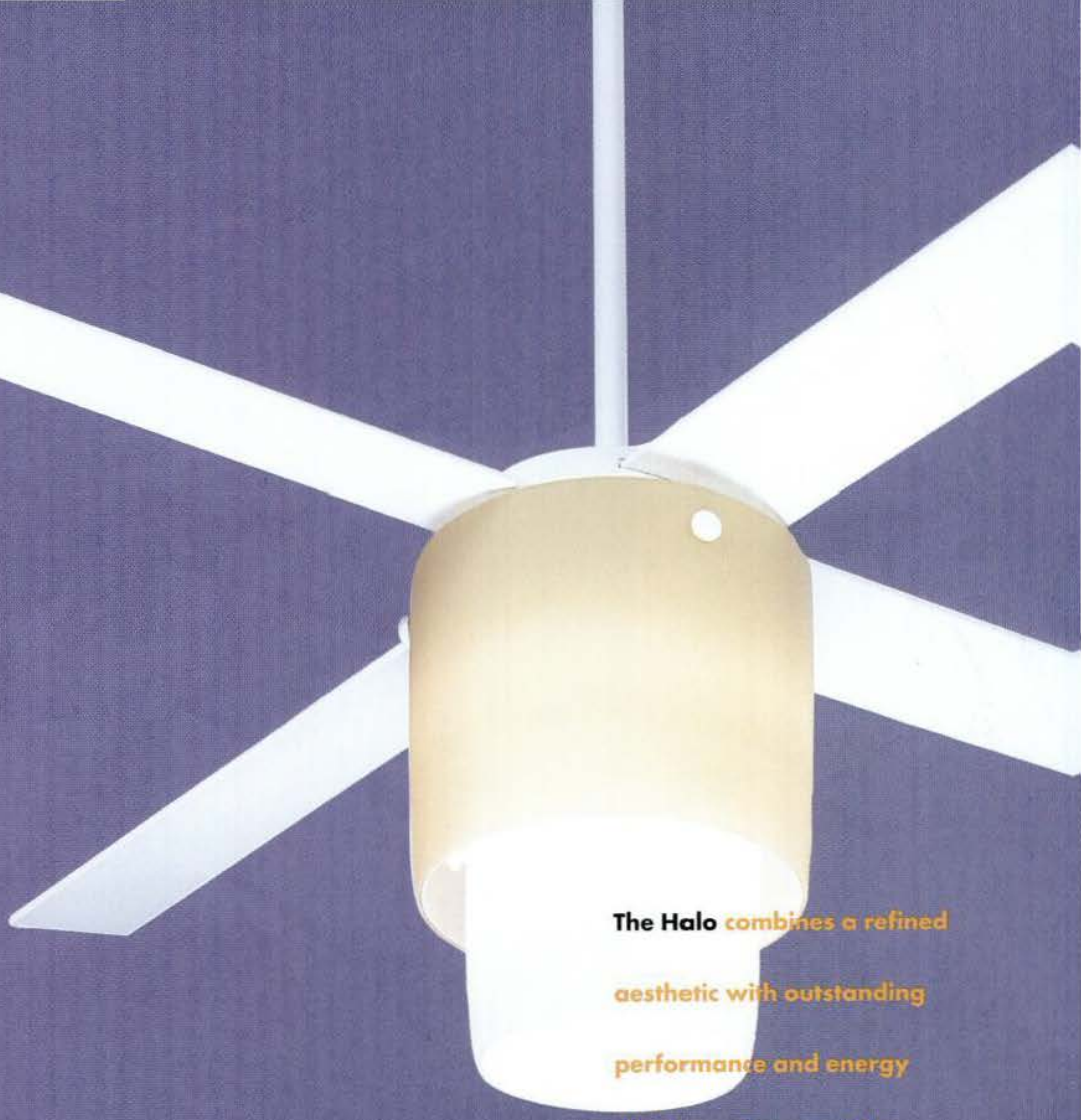
Contrary to what one might expect, Corian has not rendered the Grays' home sterile or institutional. It's decidedly cozy. "People perceive plastic to be cold, but it isn't," Rachael insists. "It depends on how you use it and what you mix it with."

Though she hadn't worked extensively with Corian before this project, Rachael has begun to look at it in a new light, bringing it to other projects she is currently working on. Her husband likes the effects so much that he asked his wife to design a new counter for one of his hot dog shops made of a continuous sheet of Corian, extending from the floor and curving to form a flat surface, in—what else?—mustard yellow. ■





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# Meet R128, a Powerhouse

House R128 sits on a steep hillside overlooking the city of Stuttgart. Parallel to a large utility pipe, a narrow bridge accesses the upstairs entrance (top). Exposed I-beams, sensors, and black Corbusier chairs dominate the spare interior (bottom and next page).

**Does anyone remember the Y2K fixation with smart** houses? One must only consider the idealistic books publishers were pimping. *Smart Homes for Dummies* was on the down side, cooing over Web-surfing refrigerators that order groceries, among other fattening high-tech consumption enhancers. In a superior undertaking, the proto-environmentalist inventions of Bucky Fuller were revived in *Your Private Sky.* Onto sophomoric bookshelves landed *New Wombs: Electric Bodies and Architectural Disorder*, whose punny title speaks for itself, sort of.

A lot has changed since those 'oo days of smart-house sci-fi rants, but any self-respecting futurist today would still—more than ever—emphasize the need for energy-efficient houses. Stuttgart's radical structural engineer Werner Sobek has a rare and uncanny gift for reading the zeitgeist. When he completed his all-glass, sensor-filled house on a wooded acre of the city's south side, and moved there with his wife and son in May 2000, he was perfectly in tune with his time but also ahead of it.

Sobek speaks of his project, abstrusely named R128, with unsuppressed pride, raising one eyebrow as he explains its scrupulous feats. "The goal," he says, "was to employ state-of-the-art technology and to have the closest possible exchange with the surrounding nature. Our house was to be as transparent as possible, to offer maximal comfort, and to be ecologically sound. House R128 fully meets all of these criteria."

Just when the engineer's calculated satisfaction gets hard to stomach, his humility makes it go down easy. Sobek is happy to consider his work disposable. He designed his house for easy disassembly, "in case another generation does not like the building. All the elements are just bolted, clipped, or held together by magnets. This allows for easy decomposition and recycling as well."

In terms of sustainable design, R128 is a powerhouse, and to the normal imagination, it's a little intimidating. Everything is operated with sensors. As you approach an unlocked door, it obligingly opens (except the oven door, which must be opened manually). When voice control is installed this year, the lights will go on if you ask them to, and the toilet will respond with alacrity to flush requests. The glass walls insulate miraculously because ►

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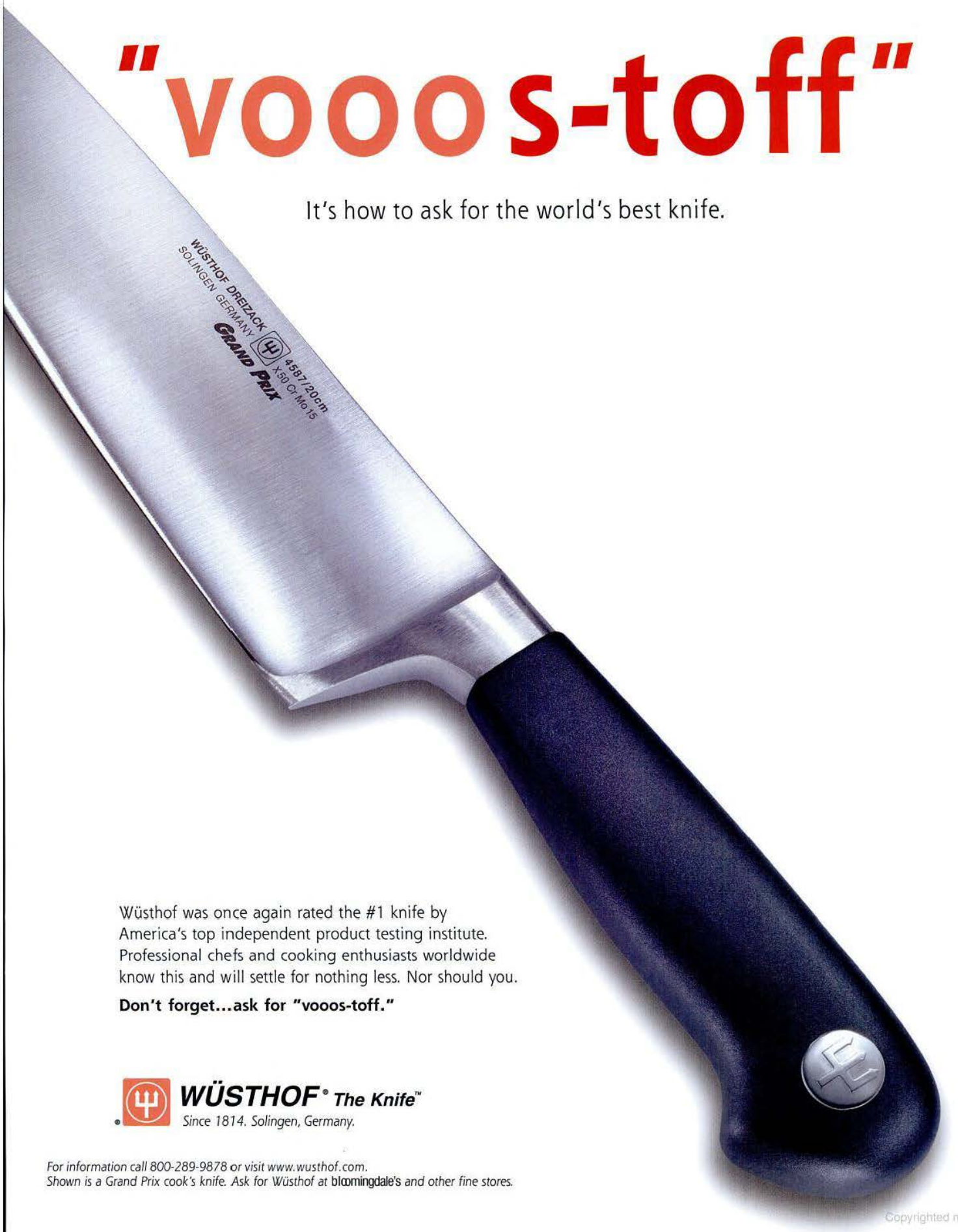


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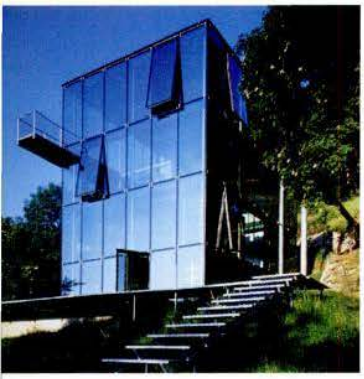

they're "high-performance triple-layer and argon-filled." (Of course.) A large water tank collects heat generated in the house through solar input and stores it at 200 degrees Fahrenheit; the hot water warms the house only when necessary. Electricity comes from photovoltaic panels on the roof. Because some months House R128 feeds power back into the grid, it earns periodic paychecks from the power supply company, which bit by bit will repay the construction costs.

Sobek trained as an engineer and an architect in '70s Stuttgart, where the university has famously striven to meld those two disciplines. The spare, metallic-hued rooms of his home seem extremely function-driven, especially to anyone slightly technophobic or just looking for something made out of wood. But, as the Sobeks would be quick to say, that person need only look outside. Though urban, their large property is so well forested that every day they see birds and bunnies, and even though the entire building is transparent from the outside as well, privacy is never a concern, not even in the bathtub. (Though this fact was not corroborated by the Sobeks' son, who is 15.)

House R128 demands an alternative lifestyle, but this is what makes it most forward-thinking. Sobek has found a unique way of responding to the assertion that today's turbo-charged, gizmo-happy world challenges architecture's relationship to the human body—an idea that came up in the *New Wombs* book. His house encapsulates the world's coolest state-of-the-art sustainable-building technologies in a see-through skin surrounded by dense flora and fauna. Thus he simulates an unorthodox Eden experience for his family. "This tree house," Ursula Sobek expounds, "this glass house which is so close to nature and the city, has for me become a place of perfect relaxation. The technology lightens the burden of everyday life without dominating it."

So, in keeping with our age of computers (and their banana-like shelf life), Sobek's impermanent house could, through its inventiveness, influence the way people think. He seems pretty sure it will. "When we open our eyes in the morning," he says, "we have a perfect view of the natural environment surrounding the house. I am convinced that this openness and constant contact with the elements also helps to open our minds." ■

While completely transparent, the Sobek house is so well insulated that it generates income through rebate checks from the power supply company.

When asked what about House R128 makes him happiest, Sobek replies, "That it needs no extra heating and, especially in summer, barely any artificial light—but it doesn't look like a tea cozy!" The glass walls are only 1.5 inches thick, and they insulate as much as four inches of fiberglass. They were manufactured at GlasFischer, a company near Stuttgart. p. 120

Photo: Gionata Xerra Artwork: William Xerra Concept and Styling: Ravasoli Silenzi Studio designwork
Doors from TreNoTre-Più designed by Antonio Citterio

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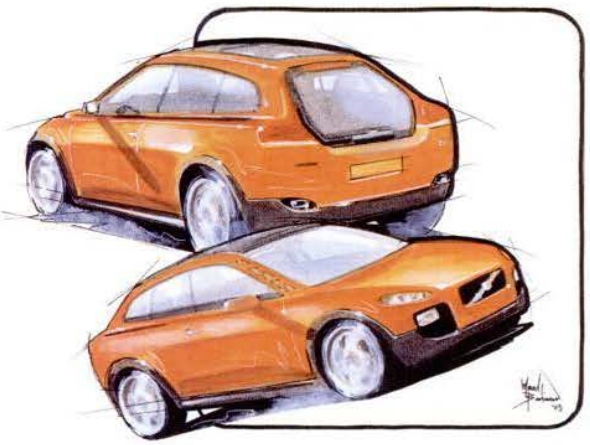
Story by Sam Grawe | Illustrations by Marcel Bastiaans


**A Note on Our Expert:** Phil Patton's interest in car design dates back to the Corvair—whose extinction, like the latest Bush presidency, is Ralph Nader's fault. "They were beautiful cars whose technical problems were fixed long before the Nader book came out. It was unfortunate that he didn't attack some other hideous Detroit monster." Having come to realize that cars are "the most ubiquitous form of design," Patton has been attending auto shows for 15 years—but not just for his own edification. He writes articles about cars and design for publications including the *New York Times*, *Wired*, *Esquire*, and *I.D.* His book *Bug: The Strange Mutations of the World's Most Famous Automobile* was published by Simon & Schuster last fall.

"We're setting a course for the future . . . come along! The fully operational Firebird III space-age car is featured in our Coliseum Century 21 exhibition, plus automatic highways, solar and atomic energy displays, a thermal engine, and other exhibits that make today tomorrow."

—General Motors Corporation, 1962 Seattle World's Fair



# Vroooom!

**Automatic highways? Nope. Solar and atomic energy** displays? Not a chance. Thermal engines? You wish.

The good people visiting the Coliseum Century 21 in the summer of 1962 were led to believe these innovations were just around the corner, so where the heck are they? It has been more than 40 years, after all. The answer, as it was back then, may simply be: just a few years away.

Enter the concept car.

As production models roll toward the utopian automotive future at a snail's pace, automakers vie for "oohs" and "ahhs" at auto shows and in the automotive press with their dazzling concepts. These vehicles—which can cost as much as $4.5 million to create—are the industry's way of dipping a toe in the pool to see if the water's nice. Realizing that developing the new SUV at your local car dealer might cost around $1.5 billion, the initial outlay of $4.5 million to generate fresh design ideas and gauge public interest seems like a darn good investment. Once a concept has proven to be a hit, it takes four years, on average, to reach production. The less fortunate contenders, such as the Firebird III space-age car, remain relegated to the pages of old souvenir programs.

The automotive industry's idea of the future may always remain about ten years out of reach, but Dwell decided not to wait that long to check out five recent concept cars that display the diversity of one of the world's largest industries. To wit: One of the cars we selected runs on hydrogen-powered fuel cells, another demonstrates dozens of safety improvements, another features an electronic personality like a Tamagotchi, one is a hobby car that would arrive as a 500-piece kit, and another is merely a 21st-century update of a classic. To help make sense of the wide-ranging field, riding shotgun on our conceptual journey is writer Phil Patton. He reports: "They keep you interested, but the companies don't want to discourage today's sales. It's definitely a brand-burnishing thing."

### Ford MA (pictured at left)

J Mays, Ford's VP of Design, unveiled this new design at L.A. MOCA's recent exhibition "Retrofuturism: The Car Design of J Mays." Influenced by video games and entirely realized on the computer, Mays's design is named after the Japanese concept of *ma*, or "the space between." The car, which has no hydraulic fluids or industrial adhesives and utilizes innovative materials such as aluminum, carbon fiber, and bamboo, is itself 96-percent recyclable, runs on a zero-emission electric engine, and would arrive at your door as a 500-piece kit!

Expert Opinion: That the MA would be premiered at a museum and not at a car show is terrific. It makes people look at it as a different kind of object. You see something at a car show and immediately start thinking, Is that coming out in 2004 or 2005? You get distracted from just considering it on its own merits. Combining metal and wood in a high-tech way recalls the juxtaposition of metal and wood in an old dune buggy or woody wagon or pickup truck. It certainly adds a new dimension to J Mays's reputation as the retro guy.

What We Think: Mays has become famous for reinventing classic cars such as the VW Beetle and Ford Thunderbird, so it is refreshing to see him develop a design this radical from scratch (although homage to the dune buggy of yore is no doubt implied). We can envision a winter's worth of weekends as-sembling our own MA, looking forward to a view of sea spray and sand whizzing under the gaps in the bamboo floor planks.

### Volvo Safety Concept Car (above)

Volvo has always been at the forefront of automotive safety. It's no surprise, then, to find this concept brimming with high-tech safety and security features—including four-point seat belts, fingerprint identification, night vision, and an infrared sensor that identifies the location of your eyes, then adjusts your driver's seat position for maximum visibility.

Expert Opinion: In the '70s and '80s, the designers known as the T-square twins (Rolf and Häkan Malmgren) created Volvo's boxy styles. This design shows that a car doesn't have to be boxy to be safe or structurally sound. Most of those old Volvos were so overengineered that they were hugely heavy, anyway. They've really succeeded in making safety sexy.

What We Think: We love that the most futuristic Volvo to date takes design cues—including the sexy hexagonal rear hatch— from our favorite vintage auto, the Volvo 1800ES hatchback. Some of the safety features seem over the top—such as the heartbeat sensor that activates when the car is parked and can alert the owner to a break-in or left-behind pet—but Volvo clearly has done its homework, adding dozens of features that we will most likely find in all cars before too long. ▸

**GM Hy-wire**

Built by the Italian firm Stile Bertone, and designed by Ed Welburn, executive director of GM Design for Body-on-Frame Architectures, the Hy-wire features an 11-inch-thick "skateboard" chassis containing all of the car's mechanics and a fuel-cell power train, on top of which can be placed any number of different shells. This results in one of the car's most innovative features, drive-by-wire—a radical handheld control for electronically controlled steering, braking, and acceleration.

Expert Opinion: It looks a little bit too sci-fi to make the point. A real question when you introduce a new technology is, should you design a very sci-fi exterior that expresses the futuristic nature of the technology? Or, if you want to get people to accept the new technology, should you then give them a familiar package? It is, however, a bold thought to question the whole steering-wheel model that we've had for over 100 years.

What We Think: Raised on 8-bit Nintendo before being old enough to drive, we thought it would be much easier to have a video-game controller than a steering wheel and foot pedals. But GM's drive-by-wire is no chunky gray rectangle with two red buttons. The PlayStation generation may adapt to the new driving controls easily enough, but is such a radical shift necessary? We do, however, find the notion of exchangeable auto bodies for a single chassis rather compelling—Dad can drive the whole soccer team in a van on the weekend, while Mom commutes in a cherry-red Formula One racer.

**Toyota pod**

Developed with Sony, the Toyota pod (short for "personalization on demand") is closer in nature to the former's AIBO robotic dog to most roadworthy vehicles. Toyota claims the pod "is devised as a partner, sharing your moods, and growing with you like your family and friends. Technological innovations en-able the pod to show emotional states and learn from experience."

Expert Opinion: We're presented with celebrities having super-personalized and customized Escalades with their own colors and electronics and wheels and so on, yet most of us are condemned to drive very dull cars. As a result, we see an increasing interest across the board of getting personality into vehicles. To rethink the car as another personal electronic accessory is kind of fun.

What We Think: What's not to like about the adorable pod? We'd hate to see ours turn "angry" red in Bay Bridge traffic, opting rather for "happy" orange on a breathtaking stretch of Highway 1. Although the interior sort of resembles a *Star Trek* shuttle craft, in the fast-food parking lot we would enjoy being able to rotate the seats to all face one another to share fries. Toyota also deserves our congratulations for the most endearing automobile innovation: a wagging antenna.

**Volkswagen Microbus**

In the spirit of the New Beetle, VW revamps its second most famous design, the Microbus. Unlike the original, it doesn't run on hemp, but it does feature a host of 21st-century updates, including thin-line xenon headlamps, a "Triptronic" five-speed gearbox, and a rear-facing camera connected to a ceiling-mounted monitor to replace the rearview mirror.

Expert Opinion: It's a far cry from the rough interiors of the hippie bus. It's a big old family thing. Statements from VW executives pointed out that the essence of the old Microbus wasn't the shape but a common social space that made it the official vehicle of the Woodstock generation. They decided that they would focus on providing maximum space to the length rather than literalizing the shape. I think it will probably work. Barbie already had one in the catalogs last Christmas, so that's a good sign.

What We Think: You knew it was coming sooner or later. After the success of the updated Beetle and the failure of the EuroVan, how could Volkswagen not try to woo the soccer-mom crowd with an updated Microbus? That the signature friendly round headlamps are replaced with futuristic slivers is somewhat indicative of the slicker, more sophisticated approach. You're not going to see any hand-painted daisies on this Microbus when it rolls up to the campground. ■

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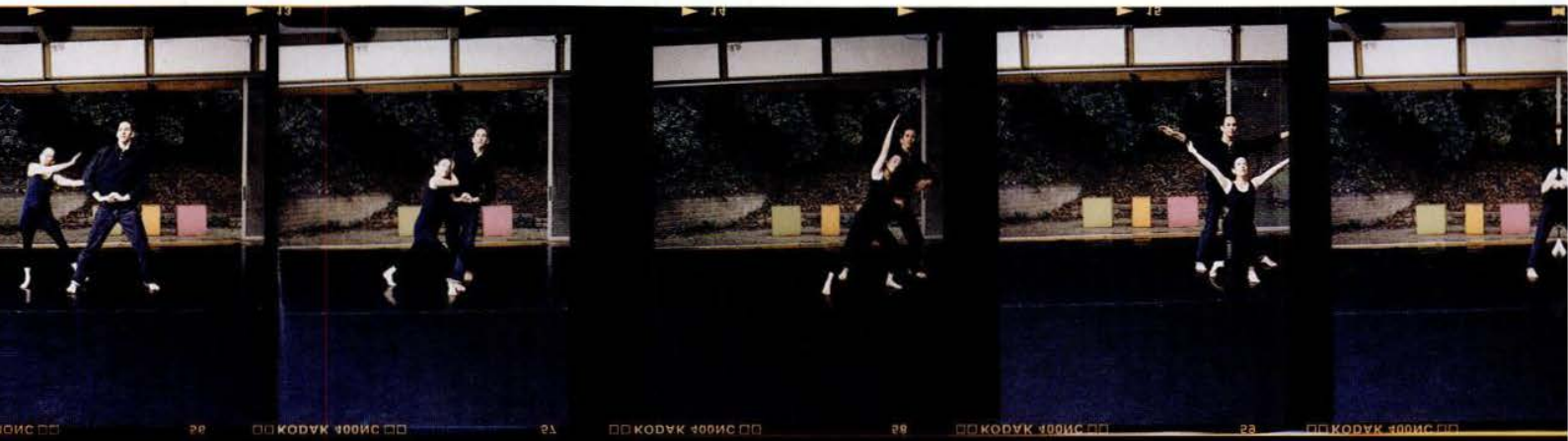

# A Space That Moves

**Dancers Diana MacNeil and Roger Gonzalez Hibner** have spent much of their careers at the intersection of modern architecture and dance. In 1997, the couple purchased the Los Angeles house of their mentor (and former employer), Bella Lewitzky, of the famed Lewitzky Dance Company. Lewitzky and her husband, architect Newell Taylor Reynolds, built the house in 1959, expanding it in 1976 to accommodate a rehearsal space featuring an entire wall of floor-to-ceiling sliding glass for Lewitzky's dance company. In the space, some of Lewitzky's most influential work was composed, helping put Los Angeles on the modern dance map.

After 30 years, however, Lewitzky closed the doors to her company. The small but vibrant Los Angeles modern dance community feared that a crucial focal point had been lost. But then MacNeil and Gonzalez Hibner purchased the house and kept the rehearsal space open in hopes of continuing the pioneering legacy of Lewitzky and Reynolds. "Los Angeles's modern dance scene is small, but so much creative work is coming out of here," says MacNeil. "We wanted to continue to provide a space that would allow for its creation."

Renamed PostHouse, the space is now available to other dance companies for rehearsals and performances at no charge. And, with the PostHouse Dance Group, headed by MacNeil and Gonzalez Hibner, up and running, it seems PostHouse has indeed picked up where Lewitzky and Reynolds left off, creating a unique community venue that supports modern dance in Los Angeles and ensures the continuation of an inspired relationship between architecture and dance. ■

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Story by Sam Grawe

Photos by Klemens Ortmeyer

# Berlin: Cool Haus

**Few cities have faced the momentous changes that** Berlin has experienced in the last decade. Shaped by Prussians, Kaisers, Nazis, Communists, and corporations, a reunited and redeveloped Berlin has come to symbolize the core of modern Europe, while quietly holding on to its sometimes troubled past.

No architecture reflects this more than the home of Germany's reunified parliamentary government, the Reichstag, and Daniel Libeskind's new Jewish Museum. Bombed and gutted during the Second World War, the Reichstag was pretty much rendered an empty shell. Rebuilt in 1956, the Reichstag's monumental Beaux Arts exterior remains today, while Sir Norman Foster's 1999 renovation has transformed the once-plodding interior into an airy, futuristic construction of glass and steel. The Kollegienhaus, an 18th-century Prussian courthouse, now serves as the entry point for Libeskind's Jewish Museum. In radical contrast to the stately Kollegienhaus, Libeskind's zinc-clad design, with its deconstructed Star of David plan, demands attention while maintaining an appropriate solemnity.

The government isn't the only entity responsible for shaping the new Berlin. On a smaller but similarly progressive scale, architects Matthew Griffin and Britta Jürgens, known as the architectural firm Deadline, have transformed an unremarkable building from the late 19th century into a streamlined sanctuary for themselves and guests of Miniloftmitte—four apartments that operate as a sort of alternative hotel run by the couple. The project, called Slender (the building is only five meters wide), is located in Mitte, the historic city center that once fell on the "wrong side" of the famous Berlin Wall.

Since the wall's destruction in 1989, cranes have dotted the neighborhood's skyline as enormous corporate and federal building projects have transformed the area; meanwhile, grassroots subcultures have emerged. The atmosphere attracted the young couple, who with some friends opened an architectural gallery space called Urban Issue in 1997. As Griffin recounts, "It was always our fundamental belief to take action on the levels you can rather than to speculate or discuss change." The gallery closed in 1999 when its lease ended, and the ►

A decade after reunification, East Berlin has "undergone incredible change at all levels," explains architect Matthew Griffin. The loft renovation he undertook with partner Britta Jürgens is emblematic of that change, embracing the old as well as the new.

pair turned their attention to Slender, their children, and new projects, but not without their having learned a great deal first. "Often the peripheral economic and legal structures surrounding a project determine the outcome," says Griffin. "We knew that to create an extraordinary building, we needed to create the right framework first." With success apparent in the results, Dwell sat down to discuss renovating a street corner of the former Eastern bloc.

**How did you find the building?**
**Jürgens:** It was a really difficult process. It took us one and a half years to find the proper spot because we were looking for a situation that you don't find very often in Berlin—a site that would give us the opportunity to do three-dimensional building rather than just a façade. This apartment is just on the back of the site, but right now we're starting a new building project that is on the front at the street level.

**What is that going to be for?**
**Griffin:** The new building will be used for our little apartments, which we call minilofts. We've got four of them now on the floor below our apartment. It's been a lot of fun, and it turned out to work really well, so we decided to do more in the front of the building.

**How are the miniloft guests?**
**Griffin:** With some people we develop a personal relationship—there was an architectural-history guest professor from the Illinois Institute of Technology here for a few weeks and we watched the World Cup finals together—and then there are other people who stay for a day and we hardly see them.

**Jürgens:** It's our connection to the world now. We never get out of the office otherwise.

**What sets your apartment apart from a typical renovation?**
**Jürgens:** As soon as they have kids, it seems like everyone decides to move out of town because they need the space. We didn't want to do that, so we tried to have an apartment on top of this building that still has many of the qualities of a suburban house—with many possibilities for the kids to move around in all directions and by developing the indoor-outdoor relationship. We've got a reduced garden, a lawn strip on top of the building, and the balcony ends in a small terrace in the top of a tree. For the kids it's the "tree house." We call it "the smokers' corner" for big people.

**What do you enjoy most about the apartment?**
**Griffin:** The light that comes through on three sides of the building. Depending on the time of year and the time of day, there are these incredible shadow plays. At night, you really sense the difference when the moon is full. There's a real connection to the elements through the openness, which is rare for the city. ■

There are still remaining vestiges of original East Berlin design, which are now becoming fashionable. One example is the chandelier (left) that Jürgens rescued from a building site in 1991 when no one else wanted it. Such relics have become common components in art installations and fashion magazines—and the couples's unique bathroom.

At only five meters in width, Slender still manages to seem expansive. Here the view from the kitchen (below) demonstrates the ample room for the couple's kids to "zoom around."

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**Kastanienallee in Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg**
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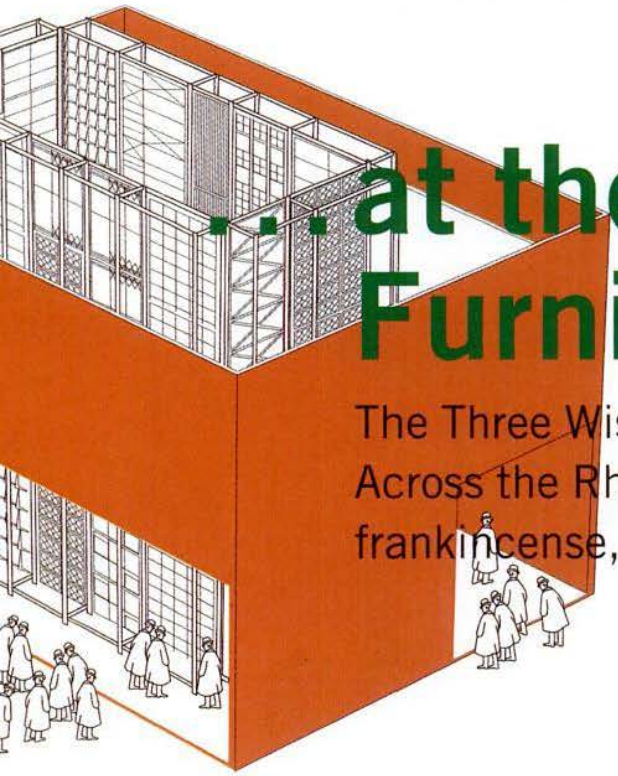
Story by Sam Grawe

**If it comes down to a choice of going to Salone del** Mobile in Milan, Italy, in the spring or Cologne, Germany's IMM (International Furniture Fair) in the winter, the decision is resoundingly obvious. But despite the glaring meteorological differences, the scene accompanying Cologne's annual furniture fair, one of Europe's largest trade shows for the home-furnishings industry, is greatly underrated. Not only do almost all of the manufacturers throw down expansive displays to leave their best impression on the Northern European market in one fell swoop, but all over the city museums, galleries, and showrooms are transformed into convincing cocktail-party venues. Also in the mix are noteworthy exhibitions and installations—118 this year—featuring everyone from established design elite to emerging contenders.

The IMM itself, contained within the almost intercontinental expanse of Cologne's Messe Exhibition Center, is a swarm of chairs, sofas, suits, and espressos. Sifting through the seemingly infinite "country style" furnishings we thought existed only in middle America, Dwell set out to find the "novelties" (that's Euro-tradeshow-speak for "brand-spanking new").



# ...at the Cologne Furniture Fair 2003

The Three Wise Men—in relic form—call Cologne home. Across the Rhine, at the IMM, you won't find gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but Europe's newest furniture.

**Ideal House Cologne** / Karim Rashid and Konstantin Grcic

If someone were to demand a 16-word explanation of the Ideal House Cologne it would read: For Karim Rashid, the ideal house is full. For Konstantin Grcic, the ideal house is empty. That is to say, Rashid's Ideal House was full of—you guessed it—Karim Rashid. His designs for everything from seating to carpets to a DJ booth dotted a predictably space-aged environment. Unfortunately, the fluid curves of Rashid's rendering were mutilated by whoever was saddled with the task of bringing it to life. The result, a Frankenstein's monster of rough-hewn right angles, detracted from the "techorganic living" feeling promoted by Rashid's design. Even more confounding was Konstantin Grcic's Ideal House—a four-sided, 11-meter-tall tower composed of various manufacturer's shelving units (all available at the IMM). Known for his minimalist designs, Grcic went even further, making the house disappear entirely. Gazing at the piled-up shelves amongst a slightly bewildered and mostly indifferent public (shoddy construction again detracted from the design), one suspected that were it presented not as an ideal house but as a sculpture it could have been more successful.

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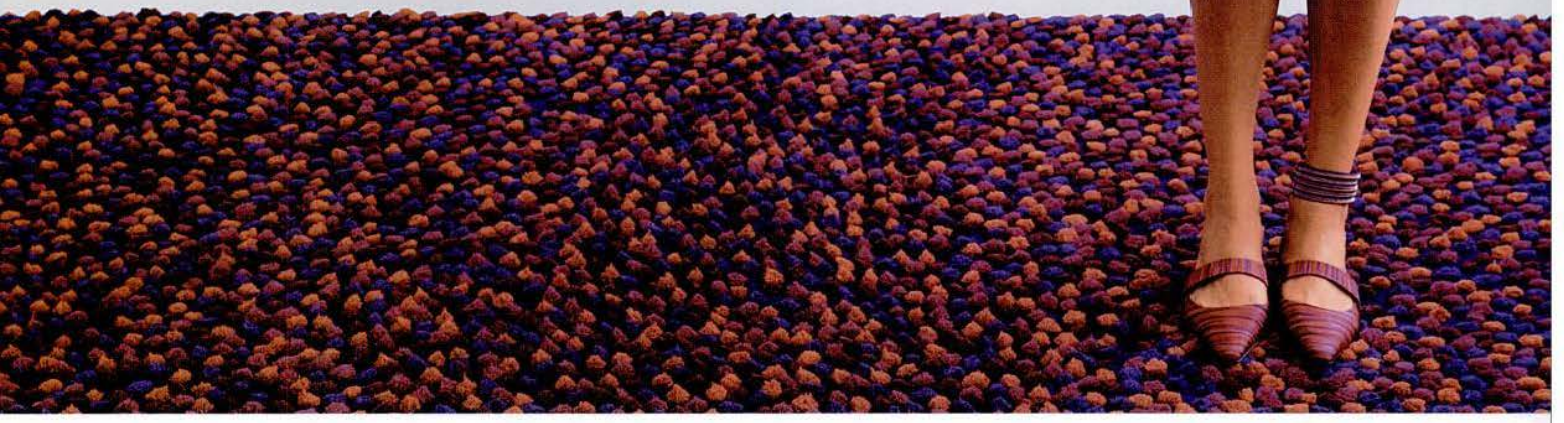
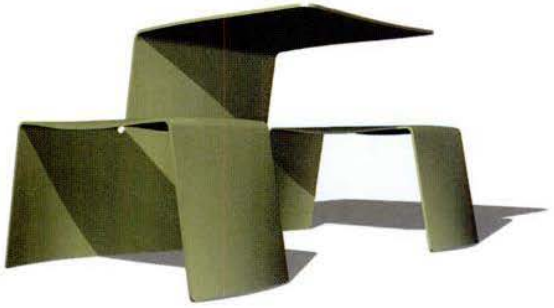
**Topissimo** / Nani Marquina / $1,105–$1,355
Rugs have the distinct ability to be the most nondescript item in a room or the most engaging. Marquina's latest collection easily falls into the latter grouping. Designed by Marquina herself, Topissimo was inspired by polka dots (we might have also guessed Fruity Pebbles) and is available in both multicolored and two-tone versions. www.nanimarquina.com





**PicNik Outdoor Table** / Extremis / $3,500
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**HOBB Chair** / COR / $1,710–$2,100
There's not much not to like about HOBB. Created by Kirsten Antje Hoppert and Steffen Kroll, who under the Studio Vertijet moniker have also designed a sofa and series of rugs for COR, HOBB's bentwood frame is a perfect example of how to make the most of a given material. The self-cantilevering seat responds to human con- tact like a diving board—negating any need for unnecessary padding and providing a surprising degree of comfort. www.cor.de

PHOTO BY ALBERT FONT (TOPISSIMO)

1. A home is only for show.
2. A home should never be cluttered. If shoes, socks, cups, newspapers, toys, jackets or family photos ever find their way into public view, remove them immediately or, better yet, just throw them away.
3. Never mix styles.
4. A modern, minimal approach to decorating is always best. The fewer pieces in a room the better. Remember, if you do not hear an echo the room has too many people and far too much furniture in it.
5. Avoid color in a home, particularly red. Grey and black are bright enough. If you must use color, use it in very, very small quantities, for instance, a vase.
6. Never use vases in a home for they will only clutter. (See rule 2.)
7. Do not over-use your furniture. In fact, try not to use your furniture at all. Sitting or lying on a piece will only make it look "comfortable" and "lived in" and that will never get your home featured in an interior design magazine.
8. Never allow children or pets in a home for they are messy and sometimes emit unwanted odors.
9. Never marry a man who has friends. Too many men in a room will ruin the look of your unused, perfect pieces.
10. Never marry a woman who likes to cook. Oh, by all means, purchase all the latest cookware, utensils and appliances, but never use them. Food is far too messy to be in one's home.
11. A home reflects who you are, who you've been and who you will be in the future. Enjoy it.*

## Styrene Lamp

Despite its hive-like, almost coralline appearance, this lamp, shown at Spin Off, the fair's young-designers exhibition, is not the work of busy bees or undersea polyps. By heating, and subsequently disfiguring, polystyrene cups, designer Paul Cocksedge arrived at the unexpectedly organic form. As a result of the melting treatment, not only does the polymer become more rigid, but no two Styrenes are alike.
www.paulcocksedge.co.uk

**Lover Upholstery** / Ligne Roset / $2,510
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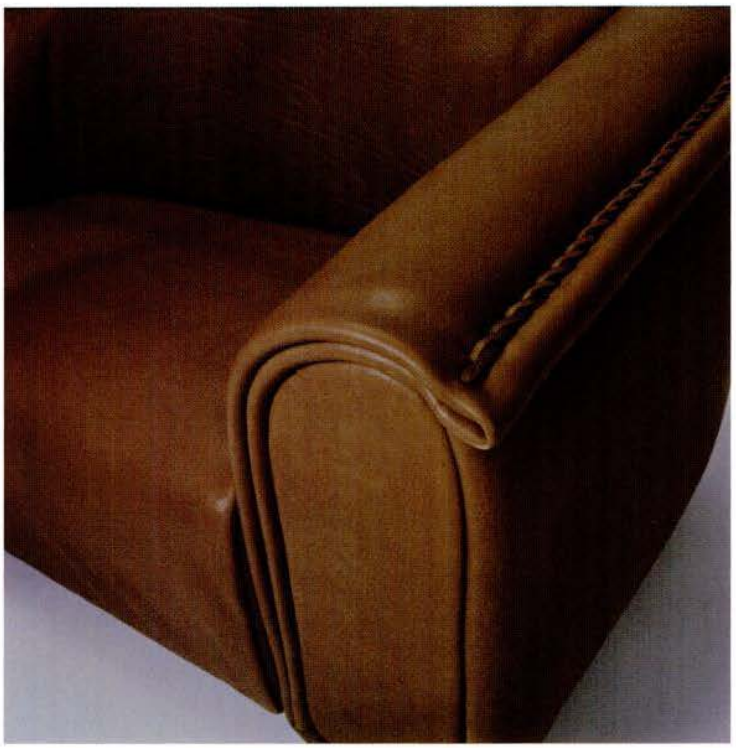

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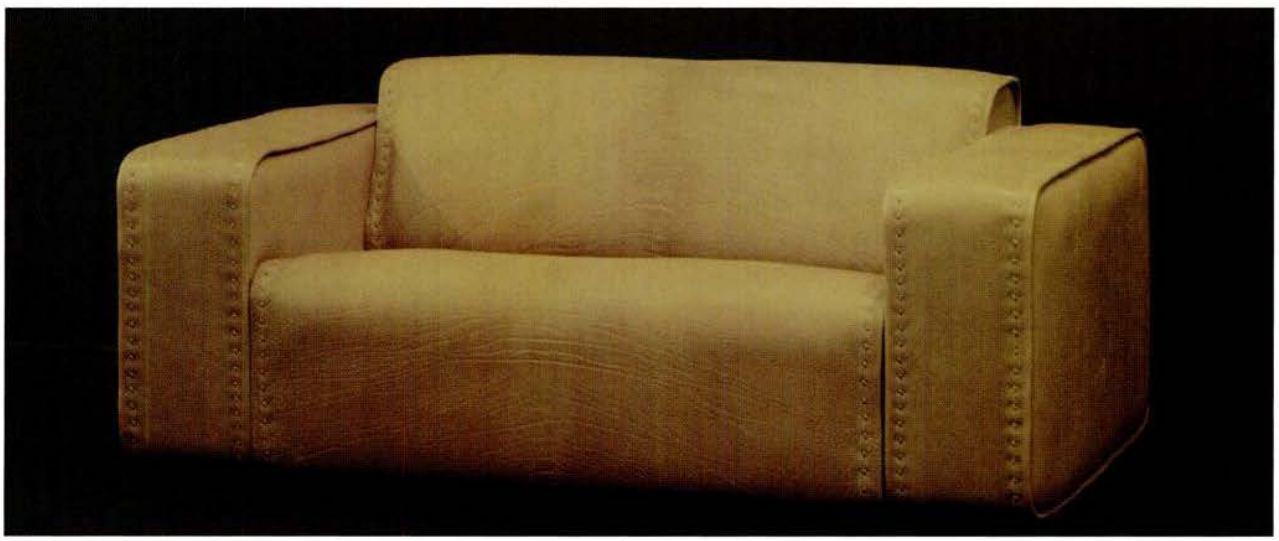

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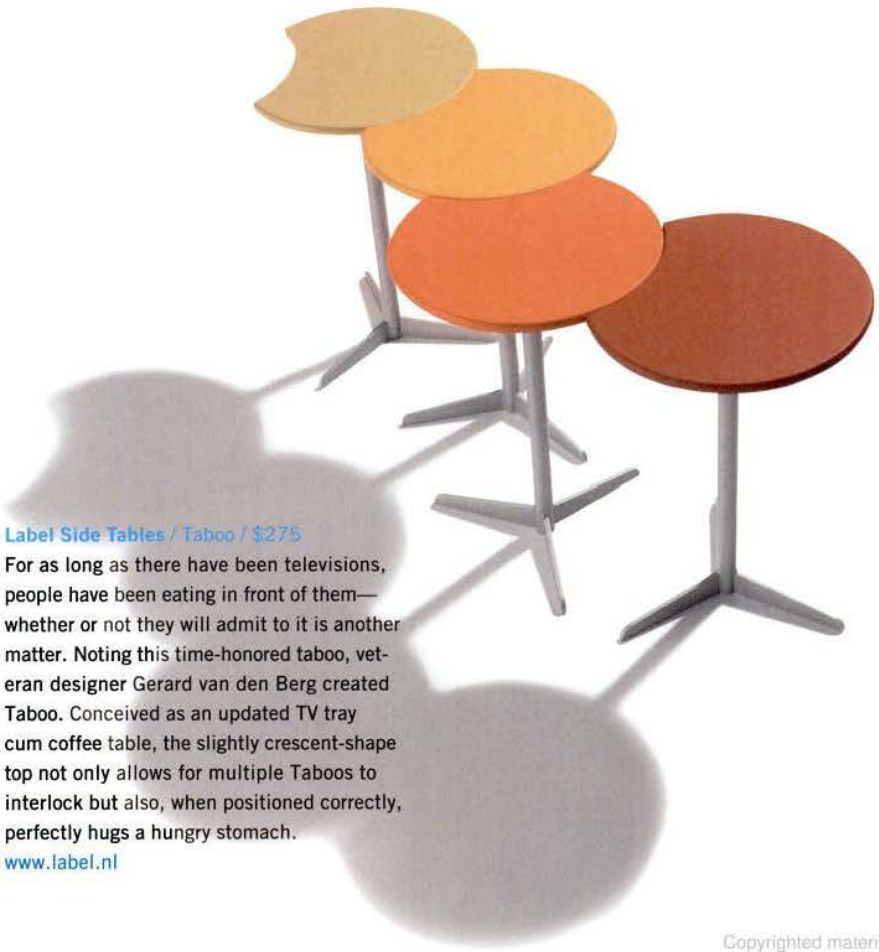
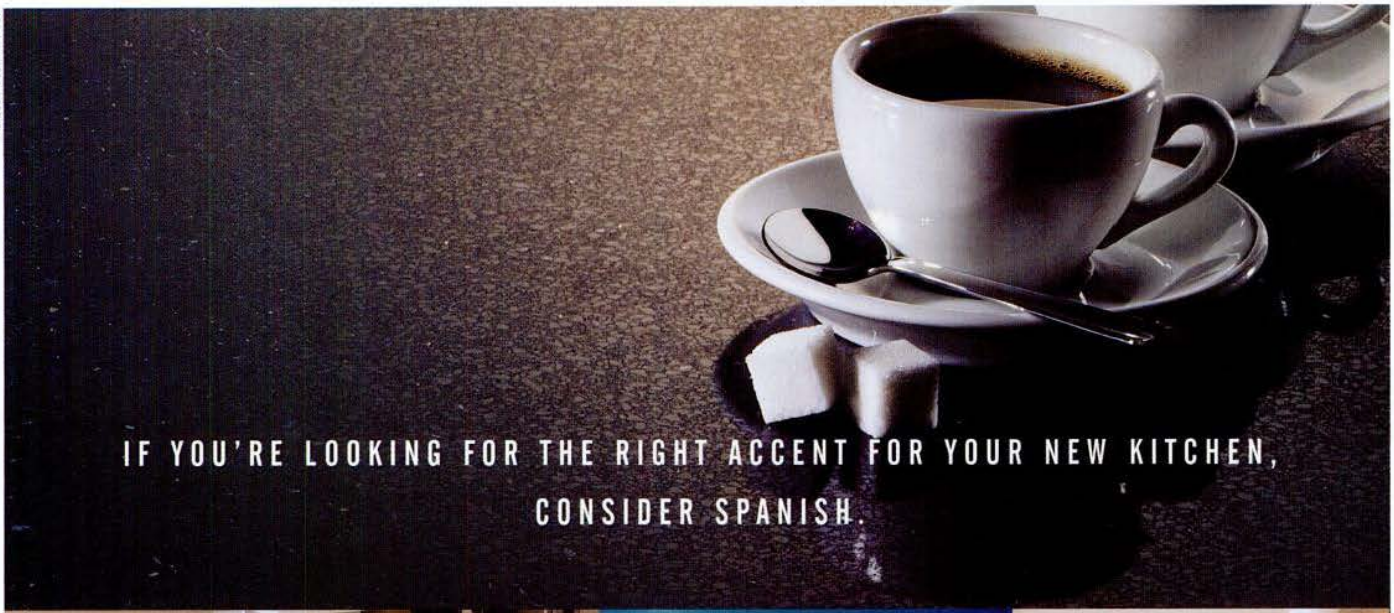


**Label Side Tables** / Taboo / $275
For as long as there have been televisions, people have been eating in front of them—whether or not they will admit to it is another matter. Noting this time-honored taboo, veteran designer Gerard van den Berg created Taboo. Conceived as an updated TV tray cum coffee table, the slightly crescent-shape top not only allows for multiple Taboos to interlock but also, when positioned correctly, perfectly hugs a hungry stomach.
www.label.nl



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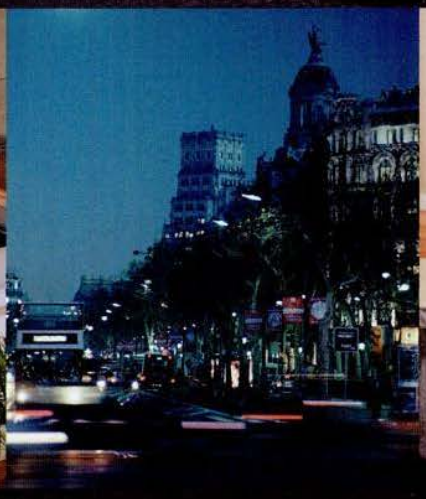

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SILESTONE by Cosentino

Story by Jane Szita

# Cubism for the Masses

**Measuring just 8.37 by 8.37 by 8.37 feet, the tiny** i-home looks something like a 3-D Mondrian in painted aluminum and glass. It's a perfect cube, but when you step inside the experience is anything but boxy. "Womblike" is how micro architect Richard Horden describes it, though the interior owes more to science than nature, being a well-orchestrated, perfectly proportioned sequence of three clearly defined spaces.

The i-home was created by Horden together with his assistants Lydia Haack, Walter Klasz, and Hendrik Müller, and architecture students at the Technical University of Munich in response to that city's student housing crisis. Smaller than most trailers, it's fully mobile: Weighing about 1.2 metric tons (without fittings), it can be easily transported by truck or trailer, enabling the university to exploit temporary sites awaiting development.

Inside, there's a double bed raised to waist height, a sunken dining area below it (inspired by Japanese tea gardens), and a two-level kitchen. The upper level of the kitchen (with a sink, stovetop, and work surface), relates to the sleeping area while the lower level (with the fridge, dishwasher, oven, trash bin, and washing machine) is within easy reach of the dining table. Large windows increase the feeling of transparency and space.

When the i-home is elevated, there's just enough room underneath to park a Smart car. Several i-homes can be stacked together (up to three units high without additional structural support), with the roof of one unit becoming the terrace of another. "The i-home shouldn't isolate people," says Horden. "Using the units in this way creates interesting communal spaces, forming a compact three-dimensional village."

Many of the i-home's innovations were adapted from car, boat, and plane design. Also significant was Horden and his team's experience working on products for NASA's long-duration missions , "designing tiny living spaces that people don't go mad in."

"Minimum mass, minimum cost" is the project mantra—an i-home will fetch around 23,000 euros (around $24,000 U.S.) when it goes into production this year. Munich is the home of Audi and BMW, and Horden hopes that the use of car assembly techniques will make this a truly mass-produced home. ■

Richard Horden and his i-home design team shunned fold-up elements, wanting to avoid a "camping-out" scenario but there are still some fun gadget-like elements. The bed, for example, can be raised on two rotating bearings, like a Range Rover chassis.

# DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF HOME ENTERTAINMENT

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Story by David Hay

Photos by John Gollings

With its bold and original sculptural design, the Buhrich House in Sydney is considered one of Australia's finest modern houses.

# Making Waves

Hugh Buhrich's residence, completed in 1971. The design elegance extends to the minimalist woolen tapestry hung to give privacy to the dining area and to the red cedar ceiling, which shifts from the horizontal into elegant waves at the rear.

**Getting to Hugh Buhrich's classic modernist home** on Sydney harbor means negotiating a steep driveway and stepping warily through bushes to the front door. Perched 40 feet above a once-unspoiled cove, the house, which was completed in 1971 and designed by the German-born architect and his wife, Eva, who is now deceased, is an ingenious response to the challenges of its precipitous site. The heavy construction materials—concrete and sandstone quarried at the site—support an open, light-filled house that appears to float effortlessly.

Still home for this understated 91-year-old, who emigrated to Australia in 1939, the house is finally getting the recognition it deserves. Now on the State Heritage Register and the subject of an upcoming book, it is widely regarded as one of the best modern houses in Australia.

Buhrich bought the rocky outcrop on Middle Harbor because he wanted to live on the water. Construction was far from easy. But by suspending a single concrete beam above the rock ledge, from which he extended cantilevers toward the water, he was able to place a building platform on top of the concrete beam. The back of the platform was attached to a retaining wall buried deep in the earth.

Inside the 2,000-square-foot home, floor-to-ceiling windows and glass doors allow for spectacular views over the water, even from the orange, all-fiberglass bathroom. In the living/dining area, the spectacular western red cedar ceiling was designed as a solution to building rules at the time, which stipulated a standard height between floor and ceiling. Elevating the floor at the back of the room—to keep the sight lines to the water for his dinner guests—would have required an unpleasant, high-angled ceiling, but, the architect recalls, "by using the waves, I averaged out the highs and lows and satisfied their regulations."

After three decades, Buhrich has not touched the house, other than to buy a new stove and a new fridge. "It's very livable," he acknowledges ever so quietly, almost mimicking the reluctance of his countrymen to recognize the brilliance of his inspired design. ■

Story by Eric Shea

Photo by Juliana Sohn

From top: Gladiator GarageWorks by Whirlpool is ready to roll; GarageTek with TekPanel lets it all hang out; and a typical garage awaits a makeover.
p. 120

Dear Dwell,
Our garage is part car hole, part workshop, part storage unit, but most of all, a great big mess. While it doesn't have to be tidier than a surgical theater, we don't even know where to start. Help!

—Christopher Torpey, Glen Rock, NJ

# The All-American Garage Solution

**While millions may believe that the kitchen is a** home's hearth, many others will argue for the all-American garage. Sure, delicious food can be made within a kitchen, but entire kitchens can be made within a garage! Even such major corporations as Ford Motor Company and Apple Computer—not to mention all the successful and, more likely, unsuccessful rock bands—were spawned in the garages of humble homes.

In fact, almost anything can be efficiently made, fixed, stored, or played from one's garage. But this can prove difficult if yours is a neglected nightmare of claustrophobic chaos. Taking on a garage organization project may seem about as fun as a paper cut, but with a little elbow grease and some spatial sorcery your cluttered capsule can house autos and myriad storage units, while leaving enough room for a lifetime's worth of puttering (and maybe with space left over for those about to rock).

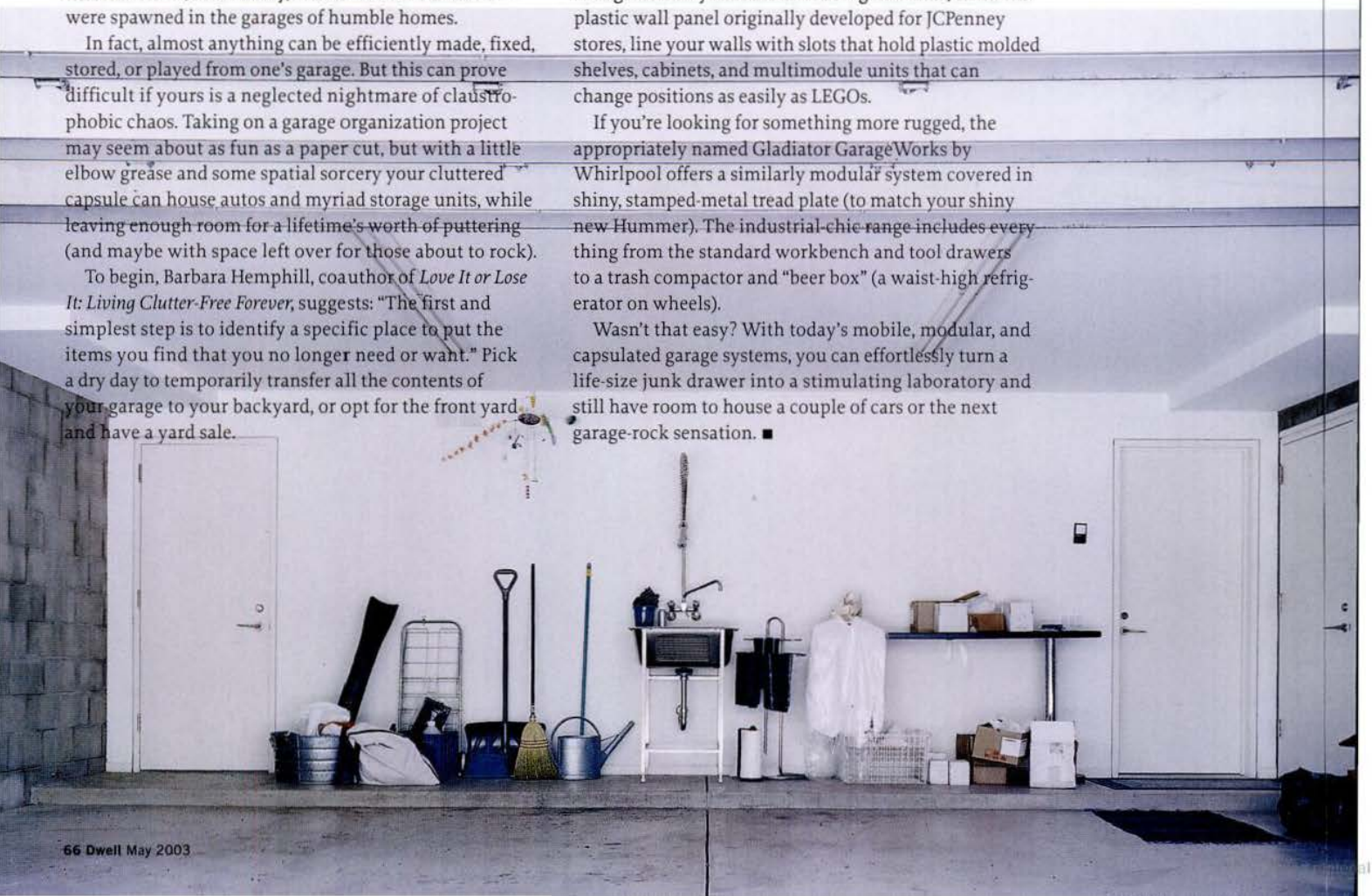
To begin, Barbara Hemphill, coauthor of *Love It or Lose It: Living Clutter-Free Forever*, suggests: "The first and simplest step is to identify a specific place to put the items you find that you no longer need or want." Pick a dry day to temporarily transfer all the contents of your garage to your backyard, or opt for the front yard and have a yard sale.

The simplest, most cost-effective path to organization is your local hardware store, where you can make friends with pegboard. Since pegboard hooks come in all shapes and sizes, the board can accommodate wrapped cables, wires, and every handheld tool known to man.

If you prefer aesthetics to a generic sea of holes, GarageTek has your solution. Using TekPanel, a thermoplastic wall panel originally developed for JCPenney stores, line your walls with slots that hold plastic molded shelves, cabinets, and multimodule units that can change positions as easily as LEGOs.

If you're looking for something more rugged, the appropriately named Gladiator GarageWorks by Whirlpool offers a similarly modular system covered in shiny, stamped-metal tread plate (to match your shiny new Hummer). The industrial-chic range includes everything from the standard workbench and tool drawers to a trash compactor and "beer box" (a waist-high refrigerator on wheels).

Wasn't that easy? With today's mobile, modular, and capsulated garage systems, you can effortlessly turn a life-size junk drawer into a stimulating laboratory and still have room to house a couple of cars or the next garage-rock sensation. ■



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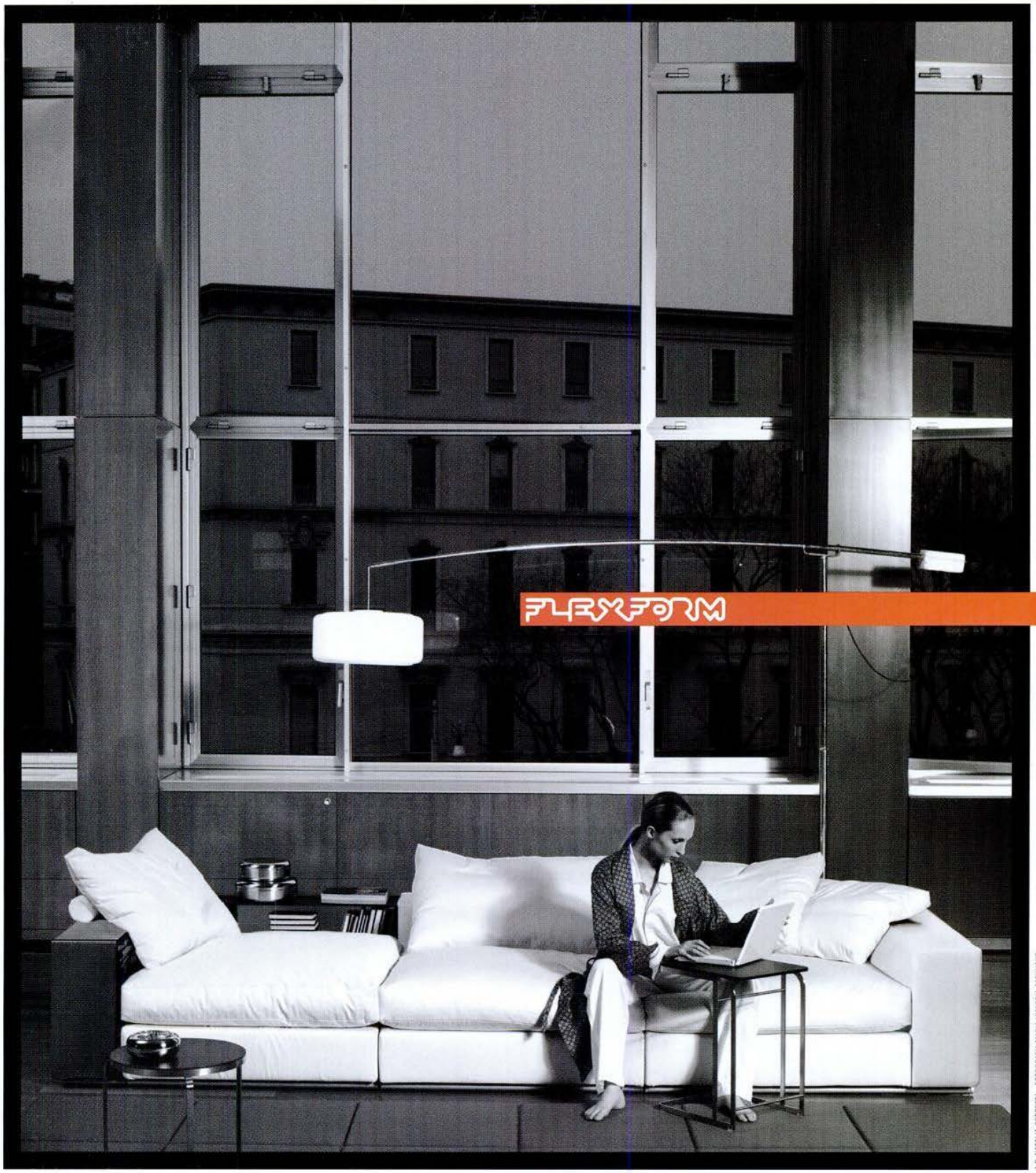


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Story by Milton Summerfield | Photo by Aya Brackett

**By now we've all seen enough episodes of *Trading Spaces*** to know that every good renovation begins with paint. For the lazy, painting is a renovation unto itself. A mere gallon of fresh latex can transform a room from hovel to homestead. While some interior decorators would have us creating "Venetian plaster" and "antique leather" finishes until no more sponges were in the sea, isn't it hard enough to decide on *one* color? After all, a good hardware store has thousands of choices all lined up on nice free swatches. Ever aware of our indecisive nature and its stranglehold on our wallets, at least one paint company, Glidden, offers a color quiz and color horoscope on its website, www.gliddenpaint.com. Plug in a little personal data, and you'll find out which color family is best for you: Vibrant, Warm, Fresh, or Calm. Within these "moods" are colors with names like Scenic Shell (Warm) and Aristocratic (Vibrant).

But the question we have about this form of marketing is: Are people really wooed by the enchanting promise of Nature's Whisper (Calm) or Windswept (Fresh)? Sadly, in these post-postmodern times, where it's not incidental that astrology has credibility on par with astronomy, the answer is a resounding yes. To wit, if you hang around long enough accosting paint shoppers among the swatches, you'll find a wealth of quixotic—and verbose—dreamers.

# What's Your Color?

## Vibrant Collection

**Valhalla**

Ian: I've always been into Led Zeppelin and Ozzy, and even once read a book about Norse mythology. I wanted to do something that said "CLEARLY, I ROCK! But I'm also 29 years old and have a steady job."

**Fresh Cut**

Paul: We're trying to decide between Limelight and Fresh Cut. Everyone wants their 15 seconds in the Limelight. But that's exactly it—15 seconds. I think Fresh Cut is better for the long run.

**Spice Island**

Sal: I'm helping my neighbor paint his rec room—we've done a lot of projects together. This color will be perfect because it's dark, it won't reflect off the TV, and it matches the Jim Beam.

## Calm Collection

**Naturally Calm**

Eva: For the last two months, I've been attending an acupressure seminar in addition to my regular yoga classes. When I come home, I want to be able to focus my energy and practice my asanas.

**Woodland Mystery**

Olivia: The woods around our house are gorgeous. I love going for walks with Cass, our Labrador, and imagining that I might be a sprite, or nymph, or elf—especially on those misty rainy days.

**Eternal Beige**

Esther: I finally convinced my husband we need an all-beige house, because it's neutral and classy and easier to clean. We're starting with the living room—Eternal Beige for the walls, with Basic Beige trim.

## Warm Collection

**Kitten White**

Phyllis: When you have as many cats as I do, it's important to keep things clean, including the walls. There are few things cleaner than a kitten's freshly licked belly—so soft and warm.

**Simmering Cider**

Thomas: When we decided to repaint the den, we wanted something nice and warm. When I saw this shade, it triggered fond memories of my uncle's orchard on crisp fall mornings. Pass the cinnamon!

**Deep Pleasure**

Donatella: If this were edible, it might be a blood sausage, which is a specialty in the region of Italy I come from. I like it because it matches our new bed linens. The color theme in the bedroom is passion.

## Fresh Collection

**Beautiful Bisque**

Andrew: I don't eat any meat except shrimp because I'm a vegetarian. My walls needed a real pick-me-up and I thought my white leather couch would sing like a dollop of sour cream in a hot bowl of bisque.

**Halo**

Mariah: My brother moved away and I'm taking over the garage. My parents wouldn't let me paint it black, so this is the next best thing to accent the pietà my boyfriend made out of scrap iron and leather.

**Renewal**

Karen: I wash my hands 12 to 15 times a day. I also have my pores cleansed professionally at least once a month. I wanted a color in the upstairs bathroom which would say "I'm hygienic . . . every day."

Story by Raul Barreneche | Photos by Alexei Hay

# A Loft in the Country

Architect Joe Levine (at right) converted this pre–Civil War era barn into a weekend retreat. To facilitate the construction of new foundations and sub-grade spaces, the original structure (above) had to be lifted off the ground. Work also included the restoration of the heavy timber structural frame.

Seeing the potential in a dilapidated barn in the country, an architect known for his work on historic restorations of New York City landmarks undertakes one of his own.

**Project:** Levine/Cyphers Residence
**Architect:** Joe Levine
**Location:** Milanville, PA

For the house's exterior, the architect used locally quarried fieldstones, cedar siding, and lead-coated copper sheet metal. All doors and windows were custom-made by woodworker (and neighbor) Larry Braverman.

**For weary urbanites, nothing signals a respite from** the city like an honest-to-goodness barn. Its spare, simple silhouette is shorthand for the clean living and country air that sent Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor in search of bucolic bliss in *Green Acres*. New York architect Joe Levine and his wife, Jane Cyphers, were looking for a piece of that same restful country life when they bought a dilapidated 1850s barn in a quiet corner of Pennsylvania. They planned to turn the barn into a weekend retreat, but Levine had a slightly different idea of what shape peace and quiet might take. "I didn't want a little red barn," says Levine. "I wanted a reincarnation of the barn—into a house."

Levine and Cyphers bought the neglected structure, which is said to have once been a station on the Underground Railroad, five years ago. The barn was part of a larger property overlooking the Delaware River in Milanville, Pennsylvania, about 100 miles northwest of New York but as far from the grit and grime of Manhattan as you can get in a two-hour drive. The barn's previous owners, friends of Levine and Cyphers's who still live just up the hill, sold it to the couple along with 11 acres of land. Levine vividly remembers their first impression: "Jane and I went up to take a look at it, and we were just floored. It had all the romantic characteristics of a barn, and the space was astounding. It was the archetypal barn, with light streaming in through the slots and a great smell of hay. Jane said, 'Whatever you do, don't lose this.' "

Even though the barn's wooden boards were falling off and the roof was visibly bowed, Levine knew he had to preserve the post-and-beam structure. At first, he was afraid that if he took the barn apart he wouldn't be able to reassemble it with the same timbers. Luckily, he had a strong background in salvaging old structures: The core work of his Manhattan firm, Bone/Levine Architects, is consulting on historic restoration projects. Levine has taken apart and reassembled hundreds of landmark buildings in New York City. Still, this particular job had a big learning curve. The architect and his engineers lifted the structure up 12 inches from the ground and propped it on wooden cribbing while digging and pouring new foundation walls. (While the excavation was happening below it, the structure ended up being suspended 12 feet above the new, lower ground level.)

Inside, there was no obvious way to straighten out the wayward beams and columns. The rafters were sagging and the frame was hopelessly out of plumb. But, necessity being the mother of invention, Levine and his team solved the problem by attaching a pair of Y-shaped steel braces to columns at the center of the barn, which support a new aluminum I-beam slipped underneath the ▸

Opposite: The family treats the polished floor of high-quality cherry wood like a piece of furniture—no shoes allowed. The barn's in-floor heating means no radiators are necessary—and ensures toasty feet in wintertime. It also provides good insurance against frequent winter ice storms that can snap power lines and leave less industrious homeowners without heat. The Salsa sofa is by Peter Stamberg and Paul Aferiat for Knoll. The PK22 iron-and-cord chair was designed by Paul Kjaerholm. p. 120

The wood-burning stove by Rais + Wittus is part of the cold-weather, Friday-night ritual of arriving and starting a fire to warm the place up by bedtime. Levine designed the interior staircases and the metal light fixtures; Braverman manufactured them. p. 120

ceiling rafters. Every day for a month, the work crew cranked the braces, pushing the sagging structure up and outward, an inch a day. Eventually things were straightened out, so to speak. You can still see the inventive bracing mechanism spreading out from the interior columns like the silvery branches of a tree.

Being a hands-on guy, Levine would have done the construction work himself, but he figured it would take ten years of weekends to do it. So Levine's next-door neighbor, Larry Braverman, a cabinetmaker and woodworker, stepped in. Braverman took charge of overseeing the construction staff and became the primary builder. "I treated it like one big piece of furniture," explains Braverman, who was the ideal onsite stand-in for Levine. "A perfectionist meets another perfectionist," he jokes, and it's a good thing that such a detail-oriented craftsman was in charge: Except for the appliances, everything is custom-made, from the roof purlins and sliding glass doors to the hardware on the kitchen cabinets. "The house is based on perfection, precision, and small feats of engineering," adds Braverman.

To keep the reengineered structure in evidence, Levine put the barn's new skin outside the structure. He clad the north and south walls in stained cedar and covered the west-facing wall in corrugated-fiberglass panels. A pair of glass barn doors in the center of the fiberglass wall is the de facto front door. On the eastern wall, Levine let loose with a giant expanse of windows along the entire length of the barn. The top layer of windows is fixed; the bottom layer has eight sliding doors that roll away to open the entire façade to the river below. The old barn boards were salvaged and transformed into sliding shutters that control daylight and create a modicum of privacy from the road below. Thanks to these rolling shutters, the house becomes a giant porch—and re-creates that sensation of light filtering in through the barn boards that so charmed Cyphers at first sight.

With so much effort spent on preserving the barn's soaring interior expanse, Levine and his family didn't want to carve up the 1,200-square-foot floor plan into separate rooms. They kept the inside free and clear, except for a freestanding box of translucent fiberglass panels and lacquered-plywood closets enclosing the bathroom. The compact but open kitchen floats atop ▸

a patch of galvanized steel. The rest of the main floor is an undivided living and dining space where Levine and Cyphers's two teenage daughters, Raye and Emma, both serious figure skaters, have been known to practice dance and skating routines.

There are no bedrooms, just two 200-square-foot sleeping lofts where the barn's long-vanished haylofts used to be. Levine and Cyphers share one and the girls share the other. Sheets draped over the lofts' cable handrails provide the only visual privacy in the sleeping quarters; acoustic privacy is nonexistent. (Translucent sliding enclosures are in the works.) "Privacy has definitely been a challenge. It yielded to the space," Levine admits. "Even at home in Brooklyn, we've always given up certain aspects of privacy for space. It's just not that important for us. The kids are now 15 and 17, so they need more privacy than they did five or six years ago when we started on the project. Now they bring friends up for the weekend and expect Jane and me to go to a bed-and-breakfast so they can have the run of the house." Sometimes Levine and Cyphers do camp out, bequeathing the barn to their guests while they retire to tents pitched outside.

Levine and Cyphers are counting on an increased supply of visitors in the years to come: This summer, Levine hopes to start building a little guest house atop the foundations of an old chicken coop next to the barn. He plans to construct a bathroom and sauna and to make a small guest room from an authentic New York City water tank salvaged from one of his firm's restoration jobs. "It'll be the perfect silo to the barn," he says. ■

Opposite: Levine went all out for the dramatic kitchen, which features state-of-the-art appliances from Thermador, Bosch, Sub-Zero, and Viking. The generously proportioned stainless steel kitchen counter was designed by Levine and manufactured by Industrial Metals in New York. p. 120

A view from the kitchen: Raye and Emma chat with their dad at the white oak dining table he designed. The Ant chairs are by Arne Jacobsen. Visible at the rear is one of the house's most unique features: a wall of sliding glass windows with operable shutters that faces out to the Delaware River.

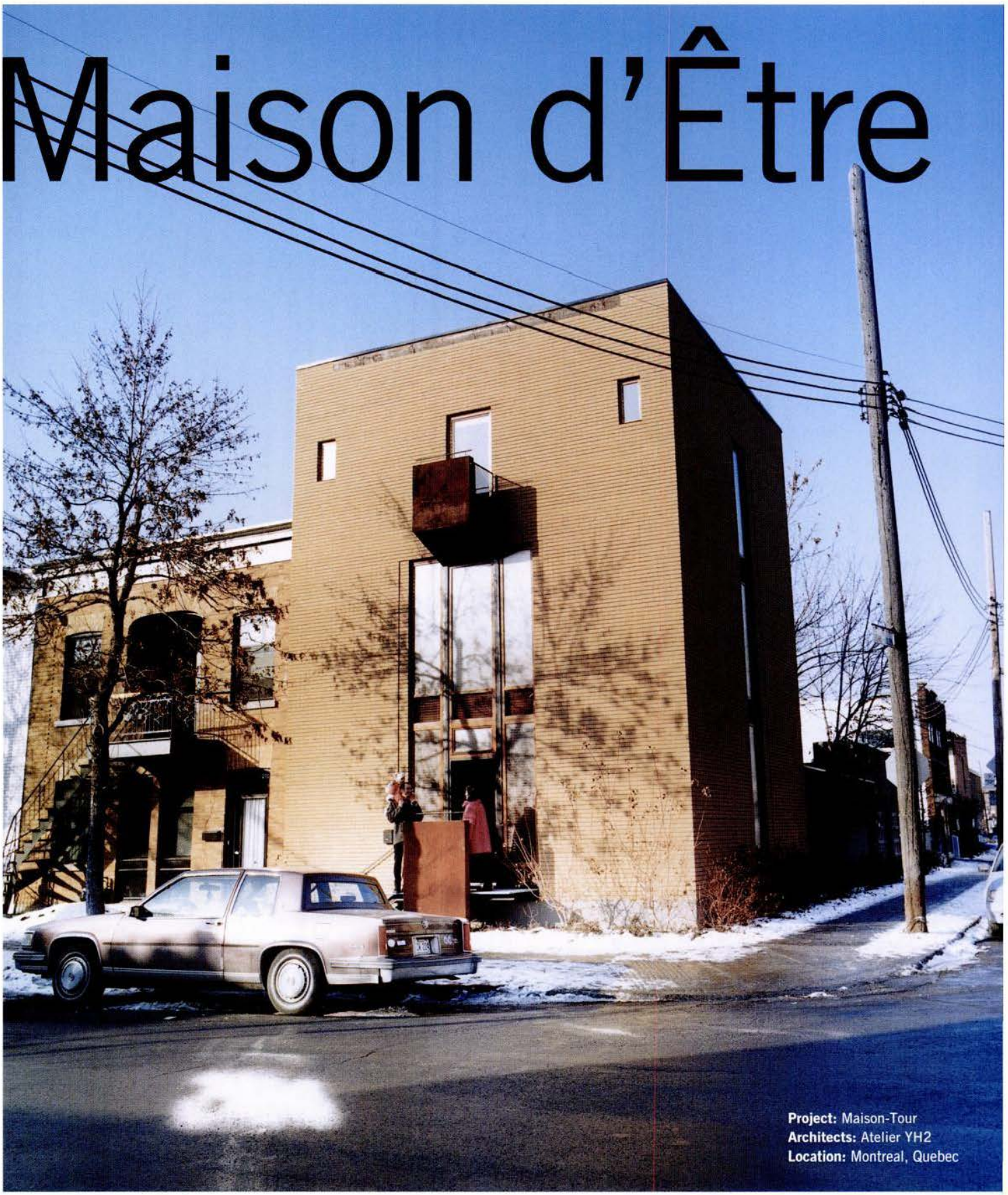
## Urban Kitchen, Rural Setting

Like a lot of New Yorkers, Joe Levine and Jane Cyphers have for years done without many day-to-day amenities that people elsewhere take for granted—like a roomy kitchen with large appliances and ample counter space. So when they turned a run-down barn into a lofty weekend getaway, a substantial kitchen with all of the above—and more—was at the top of their wish list.

Like everything else in the renovated barn, the open kitchen was custom-designed from top to bottom. It neatly fills one corner. Levine designed the back wall as a freestanding piece of cabinetry, exactingly crafted by builder, cabinetmaker, and next-door neighbor Larry Braverman. The rear wall is divided into four bays: One has open cabinets for spices and cookbooks above a marble-topped stack of drawers; the central bays house a Sub-Zero fridge, Thermador oven, and Bosch dishwasher; and the fourth contains a pantry. A row of lacquered-plywood cabinets and cupboards across the top of the freestanding wall ties the unit together visually.

Levine designed the island as a dynamic centerpiece to an otherwise simple kitchen. The exposed structure gives simple, straight-forward materials, like the brushed stainless steel used for the countertop, a sculptural flourish. The counter cantilevers out from a central steel support that conceals water and gas lines; angled stainless steel brackets lend extra support and more room for cookbooks. At one end of the counter is an industrial double sink mounted flush with the aluminum countertop; at the other is a four-burner Viking gas range. Lacquered-plywood drawers seem to float beneath the counter. Most weekends, the kitchen is the barn's center of attention, where Levine, Cyphers, and their daughters can prepare something they rarely enjoy during their hectic weeks in the city: a quiet dinner at home. —R.B.

# Maison d'Être



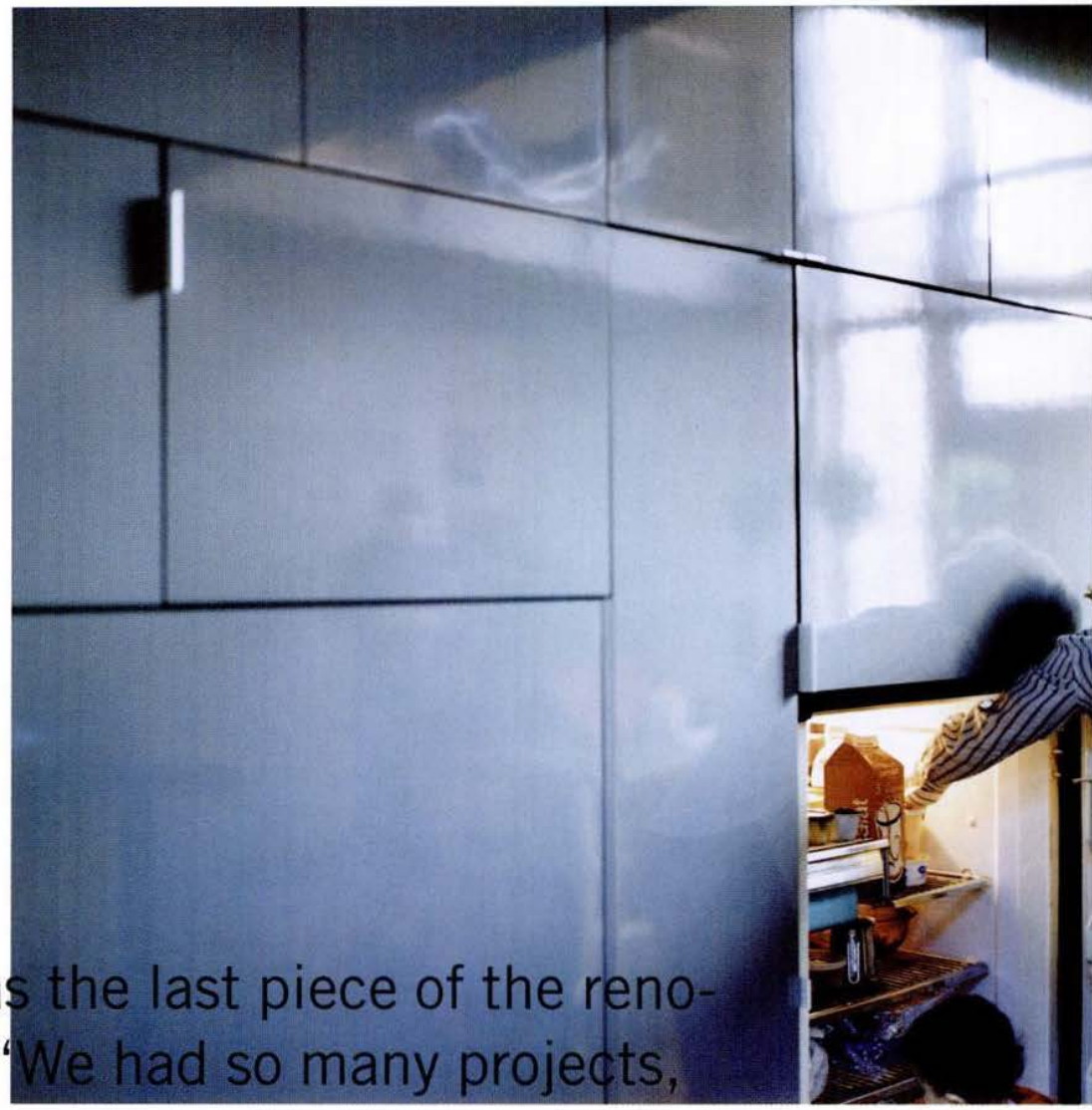
**Project:** Maison-Tour
**Architects:** Atelier YH2
**Location:** Montreal, Quebec

# "If a building is inspiring, then it's actually more interesting to renovate than to do a new one."

**After doing all the work that goes into a renovation, most people would be relieved at its completion and loathe to take up the challenge again. But that's not the case for Marie-Claude Hamelin and Loukas Yiacouvakis, a pair of architects in Montreal, Quebec, who appear to be somewhat obsessed with the arduous process. Their current residence entered their lives as a 25-by-25-foot single-story home and then, after they demolished all but the basic footprint over the course of a weekend, became the fourth renovation they've undertaken for themselves in ten years. "We like to buy and resell houses," explains Hamelin matter-of-factly. "But we decided we'll stay here for five years. Maybe more, but not less."**

After demolition, the architects used structural beams to avoid having to build interior walls. "We wanted it all open," says Hamelin. The couple, who live in their house with one-year-old daughter Lou (inset), call it Maison-Tour, and as you ascend through the "tower," you transition hierarchically from public space to private. The studio, garden, and kitchen on the first floor are open to visitors, friends, and clients. ("Our clients all become our friends anyway, so it's the same thing," says Hamelin.) The second floor is given over to the living area (at left) and the third to the bedroom. The whole structure transitions seamlessly to the outdoors by way of a beautiful solid cumaru floor that extends from the kitchen out to the porch.

"Working within the city rules was the biggest challenge. How can you best create something new that still fits in with the city around it?"

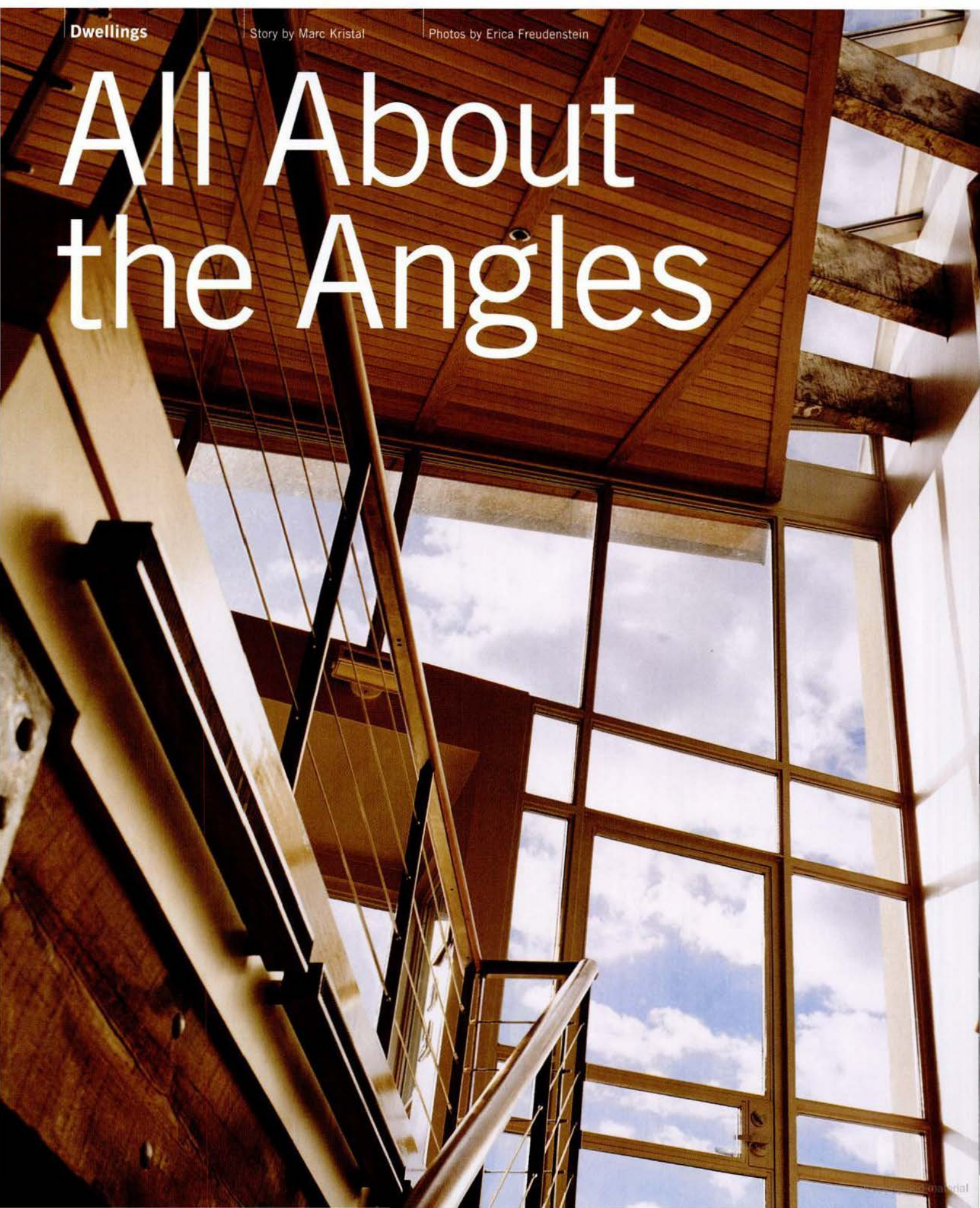


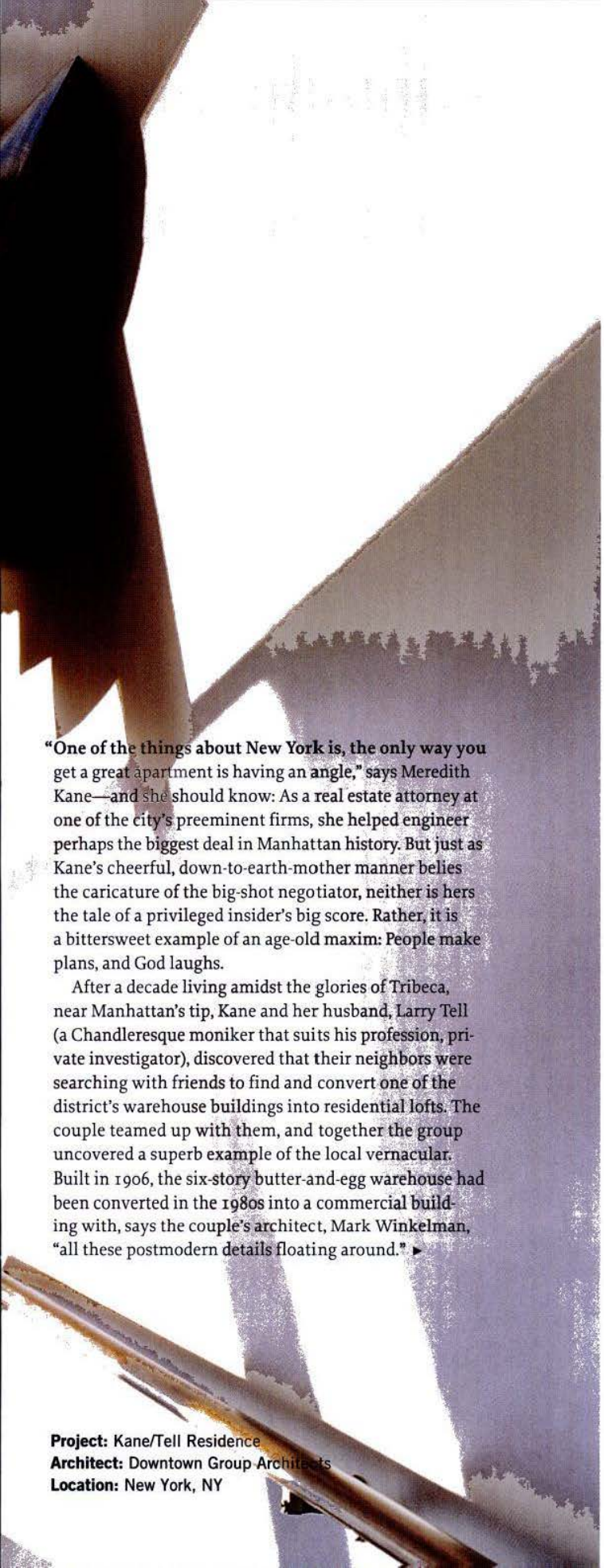
The kitchen was the last piece of the renovation puzzle. "We had so many projects, we didn't have the time to finish our own." says Hamelin.

The kitchen is understated to the point of being indiscernible: With the exception of the kitchen sink, all fixtures and storage are hidden behind glass laminate. ("Invisible" appliances include a Bosch dishwasher and a "vintage" refrigerator.) "I don't like to see all the buttons and windows of appliances," explains Hamelin. What Hamelin and Yiacouvakis do like to see is their garden, which is unquestionably the focal point of the house (and was, alas, covered with snow during our shoot). "The potential of creating intimate garden spaces—that's been our criteria for choosing all these houses we've renovated," says Hamelin. "In summer, the roll-up door is always open. We are never upstairs. The living is outside."

Story by Marc Kristal | Photos by Erica Freudenstein

# All About the Angles





**"One of the things about New York is, the only way you** get a great apartment is having an **angle,"** says Meredith Kane—and she should know: As a real estate attorney at one of the city's preeminent firms, she helped engineer perhaps the biggest deal in Manhattan history. But just as Kane's cheerful, down-to-earth-mother manner belies the caricature of the big-shot negotiator, neither is hers the tale of a privileged insider's big score. Rather, it is a bittersweet example of an age-old maxim: People make plans, and God laughs.

After a decade living amidst the glories of Tribeca, near Manhattan's tip, Kane and her husband, Larry Tell (a Chandleresque moniker that suits his profession, private investigator), discovered that their neighbors were searching with friends to find and convert one of the district's warehouse buildings into residential lofts. The couple teamed up with them, and together the group uncovered a superb example of the local vernacular. Built in 1906, the six-story butter-and-egg warehouse had been converted in the 1980s into a commercial building with, says the couple's architect, Mark Winkelman, "all these postmodern details floating around." ▸

**Project:** Kane/Tell Residence
**Architect:** Downtown Group Architects
**Location:** New York, NY

Underneath it all, however, lay brick walls and wooden joists, the stuff of loft-conversion dreams.

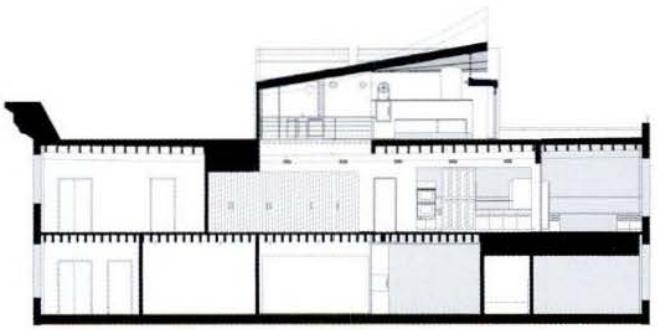
Kane served as the building's developer, and she and Tell proposed to split floors five and six, plus the roof, with the neighbors who'd brought them into the deal. As both wanted roof access and north-facing living rooms (to look out over the historic terra cotta façades across their block-long, cobblestoned street), they approached Winkelman and the project designer, Rio Rocket Valledor, with a proposed criss-cross: the lower front would get the upper rear, and vice versa. Finding this overcomplicated, Winkelman suggested simply splitting the floors and roof in two—but using a diagonal wall, so that one loft received most of the building's full 50-foot width in front, while the other enjoyed the full span in back. The couples agreed—but who'd get which space?

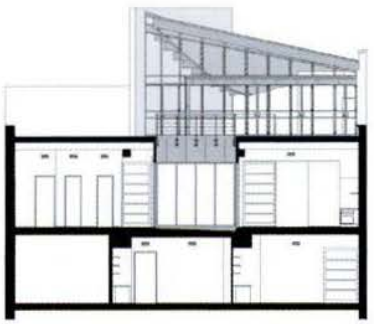
The south-facing loft seemed the lesser, as its windows were 15 feet from those next door. The roof, however, cleared the offending building, to reveal a stunning view dominated by the nearby World Trade Center. It was a vista with special significance: Kane had completed a successful five-month negotiation on behalf of developer Larry Silverstein's investor partners to secure a 99-year lease on the Twin Towers (that being the aforementioned historic deal). With a nudge from this extra resonance, Kane and Tell went south.

The funnel-shaped space, however, posed a problem. "You had a long entry hallway instead of a more square, open space to build rooms," Tell explains. And so Winkelman and Valledor contrived a dramatic solution: to use the shape to launch the new construction, not just outward, but upward—making the Twin Towers the payoff to the entire design.

Toward this end, clients and architects decided to ►

Preceding page: The drama of the three-story diagonal wall of the Kane/Tell loft is enhanced by the metallic surfaces and the cedar ceiling. Located on a historic block in Manhattan's Tribeca district, the space is crowned by a living room/mezzanine that opens onto the south-facing roof deck (above). At left, Zeke Tell and his friends enjoy some downtime.





The east- and north-facing sections (left) expose the three levels of the 5,000-square-foot loft: The children's bedrooms, family room, and Kane's office occupy the fifth floor; the kitchen and dining room, master suite, Tell's office, and the courtyard complete the sixth; and the living room sits atop the roof.

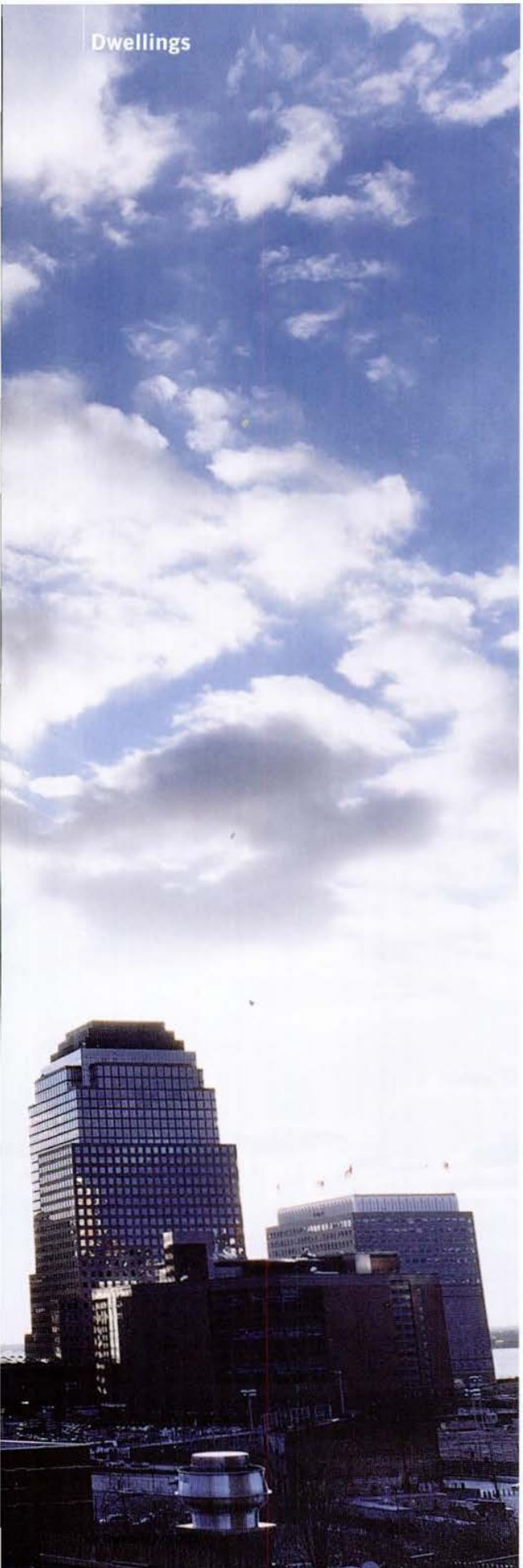
Kane and Tell resisted giving up living space for the 12-by-12-foot courtyard (above) until Mark Winkelman stressed that "the most wonderful thing is having the outdoors indoors." The Stilt dining table from Desalto is paired with Arper's Texa chairs. The sixth floor's wooden support structure (far left) is unique—the lower floors feature cast-iron pillars and steel beams. Near left: The Porcelain Verde ceramic tiles selected for the master bath by interior designer Charlene Keogh replicate the texture and appearance of slate. At right: Daughter Alexandra enjoys a rare pleasure: a good-size room of her own. Far right: The view from the roof-deck, post-9/11. p. 120

set the living room on the rooftop mezzanine—above the kitchen and dining room, which are on the sixth floor—"because we knew the roof would be a fabulous gathering place," says Kane. "We wanted to be able to have a party upstairs and have guests spill out onto the deck." To draw people upward, the architects floated a grand steel stairway on the diagonal wall, aiming it so that visitors would ascend directly toward the towers.

Winkelman and Valledor also used a computer model to calculate the angle at which the roofline of the northernmost tower would appear when viewed from the couple's front door. Then they set the apartment's own roof at the same angle, and raised it to a height at which it would seem to meet the tower's top. The architects next took the concept a step further. As the roof was higher in back than in front, they designed a cedar-clad hyperparabolic ceiling that sweeps upward like a great wing. Thus, upon entering, visitors would look up, past the long, rough-hewn wooden beam that supports the old roof, and follow the curve of the new ceiling as it soared skyward and seemed to touch the top of the tower.

"It was," Kane says simply, "stunning."

The severe majesty of the architecture is lightened, not only by the loft's original brick and wood elements, but by cherry cabinetry and doors, and the soft-hued color palette created by interior designer Charlene Keogh. Most gentling is the 12-by-14-foot courtyard Winkelman set on the sixth floor's south wall, between the master bedroom and Tell's home office. The architect conceived of it as an antidote to the neighboring windows. "We decided to ignore the view and open up an interior view," he explains. The Asian-influenced space, which was finished by landscape architect Tom Balsley, delightfully draws light, air, and weather down into the angular vessel of the loft. (The fifth floor serves as ▸



a separate suite for the couple's two children.)

"We got our certificate of occupancy in 2000," Kane says. "And we didn't get in until . . ." Kane, who talks a blue streak, hesitates. "I'll never forget the date: July 11, 2001." Exactly two months later, as a construction crew finished off details, the design's raison d'être—along with the well-being of a neighborhood, a city, and a nation—was replaced by a void.

Walking out onto the deck over a year later, Kane and Tell survey the still-mighty lower Manhattan panorama, Tell pointing out new construction along the Hudson River. The towers' absence is palpable; yet, on this autumn afternoon, pondering a vista that includes McKim, Mead & White's Municipal Building and Cass Gilbert's Woolworth tower—milestones on the great forward march of the city—one's heart soars with optimism. New York, no question, shall rise again.

Indeed, in the catastrophe's aftermath, the couple's loft helped begin that resurrection. "A lot of our neighbors who were affected—their kids are in school with our kids—came over for a big dinner, about a week and a half after September 11," Tell recalls. "That was a very warm occasion, and it made us feel this was a very welcoming place. Everybody needed something, and this made people feel recovered, to the extent that they could." Both Kane and Tell agree that, absent its culminating element, the architecture retains its power. More lastingly: It has proven its mettle as a home. ■


The spacious kitchen is accessible from Tell's home office

wooden joists and brickwork dating from 1906 with such

## Efficiency by Design

Meredith Kane and Larry Tell's 11-by-23-foot kitchen is as handsomely finished as the rest of their loft, with special features like cherry cabinetry and pietra cardosa slate countertops. The objective, however, was not so much aesthetics as, says Kane, "minimizing steps"—which she and Tell have raised to a high art.

The design reveals four major step savers, the first being the separation of food based on use. "The things that we cook, we've got in our 'pantry' pantry, which is closest to the stove," Kane explains. At the room's opposite end—actually just beyond it, in the informal dining room that doubles as Tell's study—the couple installed a tall, multishelved pantry closet that, when tugged out

night, if I'm in my study and want a snack, I can go in from that side." The large cabinet that holds glassware and dishes is also double-sided: Clean items can be put away directly from the kitchen's dishwasher, then removed from the formal dining room for convenient table-setting. (The kitchen/dining room wall was left partially open to facilitate food service.)

The ultramodern design also includes a rope-hauled dumbwaiter, which enables Kane to send food down to the kids on the fifth floor (and retrieve their dirty dishes) or hoist party snacks up to the rooftop mezzanine—no small benefit in a triplex with ceiling heights averaging 11 feet. Her favorite feature, however, is the smallest:

Story by Mimi Zeiger

Photos by Randi Berez

**Project:** American Cement Building
**Developer:** Mika Company
**Location:** Los Angeles, CA

Great views and 11,000 square feet of column-free space per floor made this distinctive office building an ideal candidate for loft conversion.

**Nestled between the multilingual strip malls of** Koreatown and the towers of Bunker Hill is Los Angeles's MacArthur Park. A faded Norma Desmond of a green space, the area once was the heart of a thriving commercial district on Wilshire Boulevard. Though street vendors hawk oranges and tamales under the gaze of colorful hand-painted murals during the day, the neighborhood might still accurately be described as "sketchy." But that didn't deter developers Patricia and Scott Schwartz of the Mika Company.

The husband-and-wife real estate and development team (along with partner Michael Kamen) often finds inspiration in places that most others wouldn't. They aren't put off by a district a bit down at its heels. In fact, the Schwartzes were one of the first groups to pioneer artist loft development in downtown Los Angeles—which at the time, in the late 1970s, was a pretty rough area.

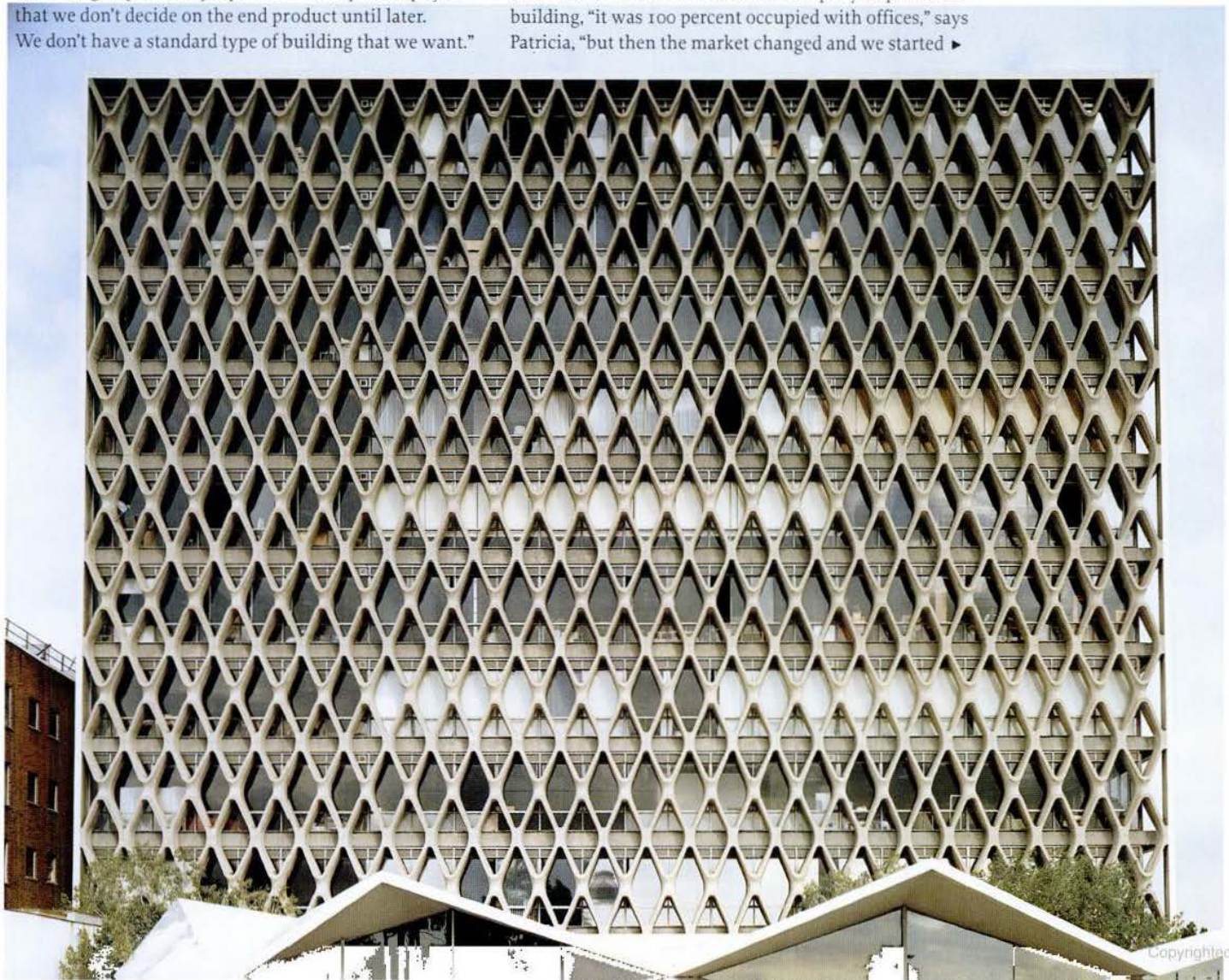
"We like to be creative. A lot of what we do is instinctive," says Scott, explaining the Mika Company's uncanny ability to create successful projects in, to use the real estate lingo, "problem properties." "Our philosophy is that we don't decide on the end product until later. We don't have a standard type of building that we want."

"We'll look at anything and see if we get a gut feeling about it," Patricia adds. And that's what happened with the American Cement Building at 2404 Wilshire, a 13-story office building that the couple converted into 48 live/work lofts. Their intuition paid off: All of the ACB's units were quickly leased to designers, architects, musicians, and painters. Sixteen more lofts will be constructed this year.

Built in 1964 as headquarters for the American Cement Company, the distinctive building, designed by the architecture firm DMJM (now DMJMH+N), expresses several different uses of concrete from functional to fancy. The concrete latticework that graces the office tower at first seems like International Style decoration, but, although sculptural, the 225 precast Xs on the façade are key to the building's structural system. By resisting vertical and lateral loads, the exoskeleton allows for column-free interiors.

The 11,000 square feet per floor of unrestricted space built around a central elevator/stair core was ideal for commercial use. When the Mika Company acquired the building, "it was 100 percent occupied with offices," says Patricia, "but then the market changed and we started ▸

The building's nine-story tower is covered on two sides by a massive concrete grill composed of 225 Xs, each weighing 4,000 pounds. Both structural and aesthetic, these distinctive forms intensify an already dramatic view of the Los Angeles skyline.



Apart from commissioning L.A. artist Peter Lodato to do the geometrically inspired mural that runs the length of the east façade (below), the developers made almost no changes to the building. As a result, new tenants like Nancy Herrmann and Marc Brown (at right) had the freedom to do what they wanted with their own interior spaces.

losing big tenants. We realized that the building worked well for something other than office use." So they gutted everything, stripping out carpet and drop ceilings, thus showcasing the concrete construction.

The results are dramatic. Each floor in the tower is broken up into six large live/work units. Exposed precast-concrete beams line the nearly 12-foot-high ceilings, but it is those X-shaped braces on the façade that are the most striking feature. "The Xs go from floor to ceiling," says Diana Park, an interior designer who lives on the eighth floor. "It's a very strong, architectural image."

Designer Nancy Herrmann, who shares her loft with creative director Marc Brown, explains that they "resisted the urge to put up a lot of walls" in their 11th-floor unit. Instead, they divided their space with tall curtain panels. "It puts emphasis on the height, since it is a very horizontal space." A 60-foot-wide window runs the length of the unit, offering panoramic views through the structural latticework. "We can watch the planes come into LAX and see all the way to the ocean," says Herrmann.

"Looking for a place in L.A., you find houses in the Hollywood hills or Melrose Place apartment complexes," Herrmann explains. "We wanted something different—a kind of space that's not usually found in Los Angeles. This experience is so much more urban, and that's what makes it so unique." ■

Before (above) and after (right): The new and improved kitchen, featuring a Franke GNX-110 stainless sink with Dornbracht Tara faucet and a black lace phyllite countertop. p. 120

The old living room (above) and the new one (left): The cabinetry and work tables were designed by Singh and built by Bjarngard. The tables are on casters, allowing them to transform into a dining room table.

Story by Nancy Levinson | Photos by Doug Cogger

When a simple kitchen remodel turned into a complete overhaul, a clutter-filled studio changed its ways and made the utmost of its 550 square feet.

# Less Stuff=More Space

**Our impulse to collect stuff and the need to find** somewhere to put it all has generated an entire bookshelf of let's-get-organized guides. But for Meg Young, a Boston artist, the desire to sort through and edit her possessions inspired not a Saturday afternoon in the storage aisles of Target, but a top-to-bottom renovation of her 550-square-foot, one-bedroom flat.

To be sure, the project started small. When Young contacted Boston architects Anne-Sophie Divenyi and Rupinder Singh, all she wanted was a new kitchen. The old one was cramped, low-ceilinged, and dark, walled off from the living room. "It was the kitchen from hell," Young says, "impossibly tiny, with a stove that had two temperatures—on and off." Young, who likes to throw parties, wanted to knock down the walls and connect the cooking and living areas, making a more spacious and convivial room for entertaining. But as the design progressed and the condominium turned into a construction site, the scope of the project grew. Possibilities emerged, and Young, who had moved in with friends to wait out construction, realized that "this was the time to get it right." The architects saw that the small, north-facing apartment would feel larger and lighter were it not parceled off into discrete rooms. The overall strategy was strong and simple: Remove the kitchen walls to create a single kitchen/dining/living area, and replace the bedroom wall with translucent panels.

These strategies provided the framework for the more detailed investigation that would follow. For both architects and client, one of the more enjoyable aspects of the project was the research and selection of appliances, lighting, materials, and finishes. In Boston, with its rich inventory of historic architecture, such research often begins in the library, after which one or another traditional look is settled on and then painstakingly re-created. Young's place might have been a candidate for such an approach: The building, located in the city's Back Bay, is a late-19th-century, bow-fronted, brick townhouse, and the apartment still had lovely period details, most prominently the fireplace with its ceramic tile surround and wood mantelpiece. For Divenyi and Singh, however, the presence of the old did not suggest a neotraditional approach; rather, it offered an elegant counterpoint to the introduction of contemporary elements, including plywood, stainless steel, brushed aluminum, sanded Plexiglas, cork, maple, and black slate.

But the choice of a modernist vocabulary only intensified that other design challenge—the question of stuff. Young's original apartment was cheerful and cluttered, with an assortment of furniture and objects vying for attention—a '50s credenza, some Paul McCobb chairs, a department store mannequin modeling a bikini, etc. Where, in the stripped-down new abode, would she put all this? The architects took up this challenge enthusiastically, focusing on what they describe as "the tension between storage and collection." And they adroitly resolved the tension by maximizing every cubic foot of the high-ceilinged space, designing not only built-in bookshelves but also a walk-in closet with nearly floor-to-ceiling drawers and shelves.

Now that Young has storage space to spare, she has less to store. Inspired by the new design, she has deaccessioned assorted furniture and bric-a-brac. The mid-century credenza, though, looks right at home. ■

Sliding acrylic panels provide both openness and privacy. They effectively close off the bedroom (seen below, minus the bed) from the living room. The shelving was designed by Rupinder Singh and built by cabinetmaker Erik Bjarngard. Rug by Flokati.

**Project:** Back Bay Studio
**Architects:** Rupinder Singh and Anne-Sophie Divenyi
**Location:** Boston, MA

Story by Lee Bey

Photos by John Ronan

# An Upgrade From Coach

Architect John Ronan deftly transformed this once regal (and more recently cluttered and dysfunctional) building into something both highly functional and aesthetically pleasing. As the interior photos demonstrate, the past calls out from amid the beautifully sleek new surrounds. Ronan designed all the cabinetry and built-ins, which are made from birch plywood. The black slate counters and desktops are from Pennsylvania's Structural Slate Company. The recessed lighting throughout is by Lightolier.
p. 120

**Coach houses are mainstays of Chicago's older neighborhoods**—architectural reminders that the modern city has, at its foundations, coachmen and gaslights, cobblestones and hitching posts.

These coach houses of yesteryear have, for the most part, been converted into garages. While Chicago's current zoning laws dissuade turning them into separate residences, more adventurous owners have converted the structures into studios or extra living spaces. Yet far too many of the transformations smack of afterthought, creating either voids or warrens of cubbylike rooms. Either way, they are often assembled with all the panache of a rec-room makeover.

Rare is the renovation that takes the time to discover, exploit, and enhance the attributes of the building type. One such exception can be found in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, just three miles north of the Loop and a little east of Wrigley Field. The inside of the two-story, century-old coach house, which spent mid-life as a cluttered garage, has been turned into a space so flexible and contemporary, it almost acts as a foil for its traditional brick-and-limestone exterior.

The magic comes courtesy of Chicago architect John Ronan, a leading light in the class of young architects around town. Owners Molly and Jim Perry were looking to turn the coach house behind their 1890s graystone into a space with guest quarters, a big playroom for their young children, and office space for Jim. There also had to be a kitchen, storage, a bathroom with a shower, and parking for two cars—a must in congested Lincoln Park.

Ronan designed a first-floor office and garage but chose not to carve up the space into a series of specialized rooms. Instead, he created an open and adaptable second floor. Generous storage areas are secreted around the margins of the room behind minimalist Miesian birch plywood cabinetry designed by Ronan. Everything stands ready to be opened up, pulled down, folded out, or tucked in out of sight—depending on the role the room is called to play. Within seconds, the space can be converted into almost anything, including a playroom, kitchen, small gym, party area, or conference room.

"My first impression was that it was an amazing space," Ronan says. "But the question we had was, How do you accommodate all the stuff without ruining the character? I still wanted to see the loft. I realized that if we played our cards right, we could accommodate everything by keeping the space open and flexible."

Good design makes the coach house function, but Ronan did get an assist from the building's original structure. Like most coach houses, it was designed with no load-bearing interior walls dropping down into the middle of the space. The building's heft is carried by the solid brick exterior walls. While the original layout and hayloft were thrown out with the clutter, along with an immobile Triumph TR6 that was parked inside ("You should have seen this place originally," Jim explains), the interior's rough mortared brick, the old-school square nails, and weathered wood joists were left intact. Old joists are visible near a new skylight and the exposed, time-mottled brick is everywhere. As Ronan explains, "You want to be aware of time. You want to be aware of age."

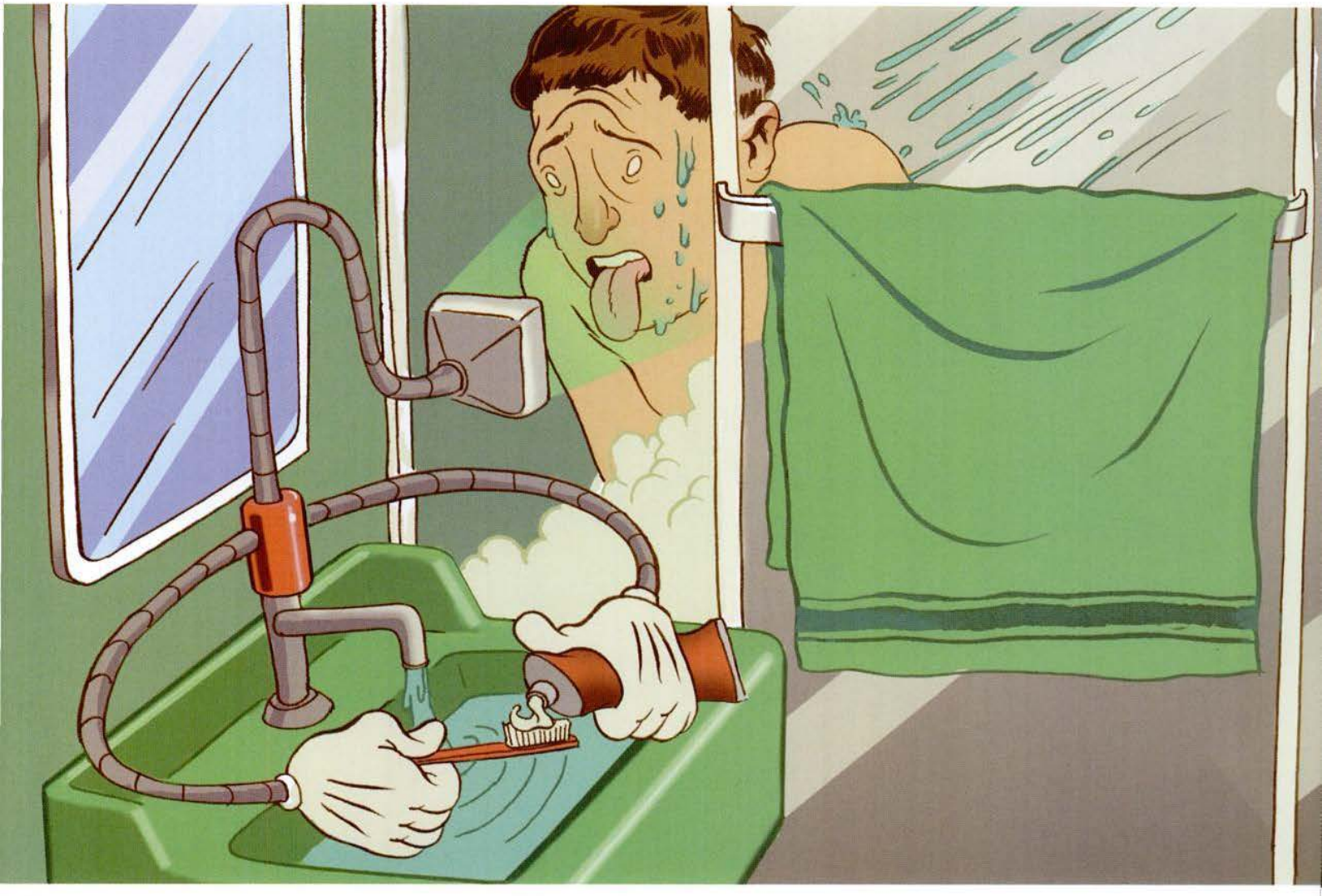
The Perrys are pleased with the new space. "If you had to place me, I would say I'm a traditionalist—my dad was an antique dealer," says Molly. "But this is a wonderful new design." ■

**Project:** Perry Coach House
**Architect:** John Ronan
**Location:** Chicago, IL

A 100-year-old coach house is handily transformed into a flexible space for living, working, and playing.

Story by Mark Dery

Illustration by Zohar Lazar



# Nothing Obsolesces Like the Future

Meet Bruce Sterling, cyberpunk novelist, rogue futurist, and hardcore design junkie, who argues that the cultural mirage we call the future is desperately in need of an upgrade.

**That Bruce Sterling—he's got an opinion about every**-thing! Plug his name into the Web search engine Google, and you'll rack up a staggering 61,700 hits. Here he is at the O'Reilly Open Source Convention, curdling the brains of those freeware fundamentalists with his brazen heresies about open-source code. Here he is in Fredericksburg, Texas, at the Renewable Energy Roundup, fulminating about our fossil-fuel addiction and the greenhouse effect. And here he is on his weblog, Schism Matrix, riffing on a news item about full-face transplants.

The man never sleeps. When he's not carrying the blowtorch for cyberpunk (the infinitely hot, dense, post-modern science-fiction genre he helped pioneer in the '80s , or churning out critically lauded novels such as *Heavy Weather* (1994), *Holy Fire* (1996), *Distraction* (1998), and *Zeitgeist* (2000), he's busy living up to his ▸

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"I've always loved this miracle material

that you can mold into whatever you want."

— David Pettigrew, Diamond D Concrete

# Concrete: New Product of Choice for Countertops, Floors

It's a trend that's taking the country by storm - concrete is leading the charge as the product of choice for kitchen countertops, floors, fireplace surrounds, even bathroom counters and vanities. Concrete is popular because it's durable and versatile. Countertops offer a warm, natural - looking material that corresponds with the popularity of more natural materials like wood, stone, and brick.

Chemical stains, coloring pigments, aggregates, and epoxy coatings can give concrete the look, texture, and feel of quarried stone such as marble, granite, and limestone. Or it can be used in its natural state. Homeowners who have indulged in concrete like creating their own colors, textures, and edges. They can even incorporate objects like broken tile, seashells, or glass into the countertop's surface.

"Most clients do their own designs," said Buddy Rhodes, known in the industry as the father of the concrete countertop.

And that, he says, is perhaps the most appealing aspect of concrete. It's hands-on and it's handcrafted. It cries out "this is all mine." Concrete countertops offer the warmth of the material without any grout lines associated with tiles. Also, there is a natural, earthy look that complements a range of kitchen styles.

Homeowners are also turning to concrete to grace their floors.

"We have stamped concrete, slate, stain, overlays, Spanish tiles, Arizona flagstone," said David Pettigrew, owner of Diamond D Concrete. "It's just amazing what technology has done," he said. "And we have no idea where it's going. It's advancing all the time."

And as the technology advances, so do the design options.

"With concrete you can use a different material that produces an old-world look - or you can make it high-tech," said Steve Eyler, owner of Eycon Sufacing.

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reputation as a weapons-grade polemicist and wiseass polymath. Whether he's prowling the Pentagon, hanging with the power elite at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, or rocking the house at High Ground, a Renaissance weekend for the designerati, he wears his turbo-geek learning lightly and his slacker irony like Kevlar.

His latest nonfiction book, *Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next Fifty Years* (Random House, December 2002), is a work of warp-drive futurist speculation and, not incidentally, an evangelical tract for a new design aesthetic. Sterling, it turns out, has a serious jones for design: In 1998, he launched the Viridian Design Movement, dedicated to the proposition that design can be a change driver, promoting clean technologies and recyclable products that are as tragically hip as they are environmentally friendly. As a fringe benefit, a greener commodity fetishism just might save us from drowning or being fried alive when global warming melts the ice caps and reduces our suburban lawns to scorched earth.

The residents of Sterling's near future live lightly on the land, while being wired to the gills. Thanks to ubiquitous computing ("ubicomp"), smart technology is everywhere: Your toothbrush "scans the contents of your mouth and catalogs its microorganisms"; your mops "have more processing power than twentieth-century national bureaucracies." And no one owns a fridge anymore because none of your genetically engineered food "ever rots without your permission." Still, this is no antiseptic machine for living—the cyborganic cocoon of *Tomorrow Now* is luxuriously appointed in engineered substances "that resemble cork, bamboo, and redwood, although they aren't."

Sterling's Viridian revision of the space-pod homes of most futurist scenarios—Monsanto's 1962 House of the Future ("Not a natural material anywhere!") is typical—is part of a larger deconstruction of futurism itself. "Nothing obsolesces like 'the future,'" he writes in the book's introduction. "The future is a process, not a theme park." *Tomorrow Now* imagines everyday life in a world where high-tech miracles always have unintended consequences. In Sterling's tomorrow, the first genetically modified superbaby, a eugenic übertot with "Olympic strength, genius IQ, drip-dry hair, [and] Teflon skin," grows into an embittered adult, a laughably lame beta release of the late-model superhumans who can think and run circles around him. The New World Disorder—"unpredictable outbursts of wackiness and scandal . . . punctuated by spasms of terror and global emergency"—is the order of the day.

*Tomorrow Now* is shadowed by the 49-year-old author's intimations of his own mortality and, on a grander scale, his premonitions of eco-catastrophe. "Authentic futurism means staring directly into your own grave and the grave of everyone, and everything, you know and love," Sterling writes, in a moment of uncharacteristic tenderness. The cultural mirage that we call the future, he argues, is desperately in need of an upgrade; where we end up, as a society, may depend on it. Dwell spoke with him by email about the future of the future—a place we'll all call home, sometime soon.

**Mark Dery:** Since *Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next Fifty Years* is a wild-eyed work of extreme speculation, let's talk interiors. Do you remember being particularly struck by any science-fiction interior, such as those dreamlike Martian homes in Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*?

**Bruce Sterling:** Yeah, I'm always watching science fiction for its décor. Especially the doors. Science fiction can't leave doors alone, for some reason. In the early *Star Trek* episodes, spaceship doors would slide into the walls with this awesome "sweeooosh" noise, dubbed in because in reality the high-tech superdoors got manually heaved back and forth by some muscular hireling on the set. In a Robert A. Heinlein novel, a door dilates open like an iris. It's a classic sci-fi image. *Star Wars* movies are full of giant rumbling fortress doors ten times bigger than they need to be. In Philip K. Dick novels, inanimate domestic objects like doors talk aloud and demand money for opening and shutting. If Microsoft ever invents "Windows for Housing," that behavior is a given.

**MD:** You're a science-fiction writer; science-fictionalize this scenario: It's 2012, and my snooze alarm's ringing. What kind of house am I waking up in? What does it look like?

**BS:** It looks familiar. It's the place where you really, truly live. You can't spare a lot of valuable time and energy marveling about it. It's damp, moldy, maybe seared and dusty. Weather extremes are the signature of the greenhouse effect. Those insurance bills are sky-high. A lot of the furniture is stuff you inherited from a dead baby boomer.

**MD:** Does it have artificially intelligent behaviors?

**BS:** Parts of it do, yeah. Appliances, mostly. Some of the behaviors were installed in a blast of corporate hype but have already broken down. A lot of them you never ▸

"I'm always watching science fiction for its décor. Especially the doors. Science fiction can't leave doors alone, for some reason."

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"I am a total blobitecture fan, but when their time comes, elaborate structures like that are a bitch to implode."

used in the first place; others you were never consciously aware of. It might have sensors built into the water taps and air filters—retrofits, mostly.

**MD:** Will the wired-to-the-gills dwellings of the future resemble the amoeboid "blobitecture" of digital architects such as Greg Lynn or Marcos Novak?

**BS:** I am a total blobitecture fan, but when their time comes, elaborate structures like that are a bitch to implode. The problem with being "wired to the gills" is remaining wired to the gills by the bygone tech standards of, say, 1973. Eight-track quadraphonic stereo in every room—wow, now that's modernity!

Except for blobitecture, we don't have any genuine modernity in our architecture. And that is a shame, a scandal—a cultural crisis, even. The stuff we like to call "modern" is all retro-modern; it's people born in 1976 buying Eileen Gray bedside tables designed in 1926 and getting all nostalgic about how sleek and ahead of the curve they are. I mean, that's a very nice table Eileen made, but it's also an embarrassing revelation about the dumbstruck stodginess of our own decade.

**MD:** What would genuine modernity look like in a society stuck on fast-forward and addicted to the media feed?

**BS:** It'd be driven by its new means of production. Probably para-biological ones. It'd be creating novel things that were previously impossible for technical reasons—stuff like blobitecture.

**MD:** Speaking of new means of production, the explanation I've always heard for the lamentable state of most mass-culture design is that the swooningly hip stuff is out of most consumers' reach—a necessary result, supposedly, of the fact that manufacturers have to reinvent the wheel when they put something like this into production, since it doesn't incorporate off-the-rack elements.

**BS:** Mark, did you ever look seriously at a Bertoia Diamond chair? They're made of cheap steel struts; they're not a big deal to manufacture. They were meant to be machine-made, but they're actually hand-welded by blue-collar biker guys. Their form is sophisticated, but they're not technically complicated. Consider that Gehry cardboard chair: That thing ought to be ubiquitous worldwide, and it ought to cost five bucks. It's made out of recycled paper and glue, for heaven's sake. People in refugee camps ought to be able to afford cardboard chairs. The Eameses are both long dead, and their Lounge chair is made out of cheap plywood, but it sells for $579 at Design Within Reach. The whole high concept here was to mass-produce this stuff, fast and in bulk, out of the cheapest possible materials, and yet it still remains high art, trapped in the museum vitrine. What is that about?

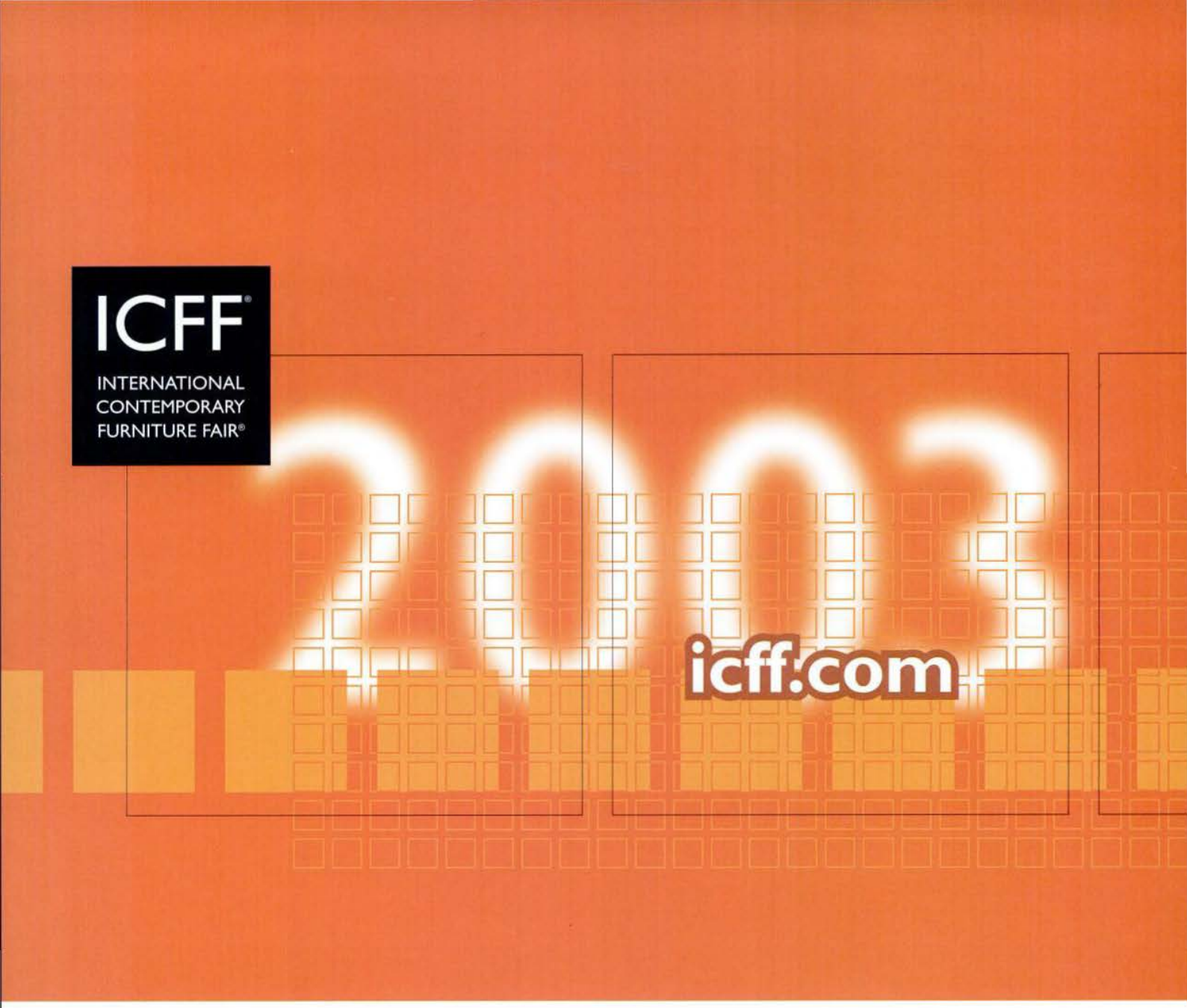
A Niels Diffrient Freedom chair, yeah, that thing has a sophisticated internal mechanism and new materials like Technogel. It is genuinely hard to construct, so it's worth the 1,200 bucks, in materials and labor alone. I don't think the problem in designer pricing is either mass taste or difficult manufacturing. It's due to the anti-industrial cachet of the art world and the domestic sphere. Home construction is very archaic; it's dominated by tradecraft. Wave after wave of industrial innovation has crashed up against it and failed.

**MD:** How do we breed a "genuinely modern" design aesthetic at a time when "the future" is always bracketed by ironic quotes and newness has the shelf life of *Wallpaper* magazine? What we're really talking about here is the obsolescence of the future—or, at least, of the idea of the future that's implicit in the notion of any new, new thing, be it design aesthetic or whatever.

**BS:** Absolutely. We definitely need our old concepts of the future to obsolesce. They're not serving our purposes, and in some important ways they're doing us harm. It's like we've hung a big shiny Mylar sheet in front of the cliff, so that we can run over it faster.

Modernism's vision of the future had fatal conceptual problems. Minimalist hardware is a bitch to keep clean and it ages very badly. People like minimalism best in arenas unsoiled by human flesh: museums and airports, fast-food restaurants where they bolt the furniture to the floors. Heaven forbid that some large hominid should be living among all that spotless Bauhaus chrome, you know . . . sneezing, stumbling, excreting, reproducing, growing up, or getting old. "We want to solve the design problem of human existence, and once we've solved it, we want it to stay solved—perfect, seamless, forever, damn it!"

We need to think of the future as a form of history that hasn't happened yet. We need to think of our passage through time as an embodied process, realizing that we live through time, that we personify it—not as metaphysical abstractions, but as living, breathing, growing, aging meat. The future is carnal. ■

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Story by Allison Arieff | Photos by Bryan Burkhart

# Everything's Minimal but the Meat

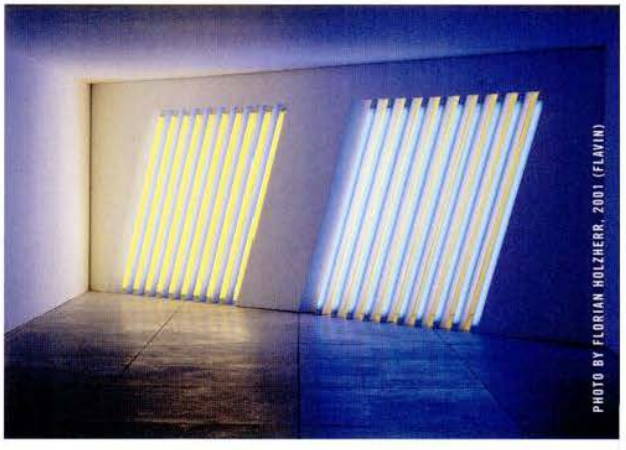
"Marfa is what the West was" is the unofficial motto of this tiny town (pop. 2,424) in Presidio County, 200 miles southeast of El Paso, Texas. You'll see it painted on signs at the eastern and western city limits, but you'll already have witnessed it in the elegiac montage of grazing cattle, a swoosh of brick-red and mustard-colored train cars, and the crumbling vestiges of ghost towns-in-the-making, as you drive your Taurus into town. Once in Marfa, you'll encounter an odd confluence of cattle ranchers, border patrol officers, German tourists in search of polished-aluminum boxes, and enough local intrigue to fuel a 10 p.m. dramatic series on CBS.

Like most of the neighboring towns (in Texas, that means about 50 miles away), Marfa has a few restaurants and bars, a couple of motels and convenience stores (including the ever-popular El Cheapo liquor store), and the Marfa Book Co., a great bookstore/gallery/café/wine bar that functions as the town's social core. Better known in the past as the location for the 1956 Elizabeth Taylor/James Dean epic *Giant*, Marfa's main draw these days is the Chinati Foundation, located at One Cavalry Road on 340 acres of land on the historic site of Fort D. A. Russell, a former military base given over to the site-specific works of the late minimalist artist Donald Judd.

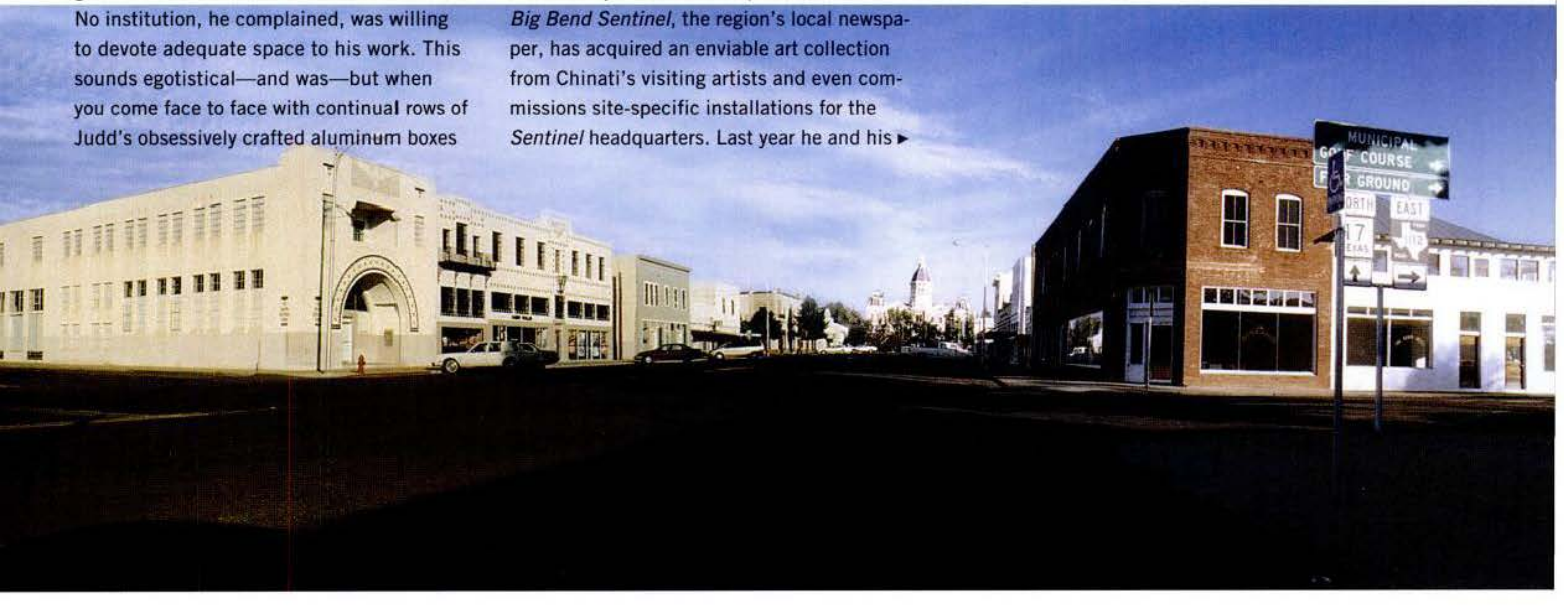
Just how did the SoHo-loft–dwelling artist end up in dusty and remote Marfa? The simplest explanation is that Judd was frustrated by the way his work was being exhibited at galleries and museums at home and abroad. No institution, he complained, was willing to devote adequate space to his work. This sounds egotistical—and was—but when you come face to face with continual rows of Judd's obsessively crafted aluminum boxes at Chinati, you can forgive him a little. What Judd knew, and what you'll understand right away, is how much his work depends on seriality. One Judd sculpture is intriguing; 51 in one room is breathtaking.

Even posthumously, Judd's presence here is inescapable. When the brash minimalist (a term he hated) first arrived on the scene in the early '70s, he wasn't very popular. Locals like Ray, engaged in conversation at the bar on the main drag (whose red neon sign simply flashes "BEER"), thought he was the "worst kind of money launderer." Judd's aggressive acquisition of local property—old army barracks, three old hotels, a bank, the old ice house—was no doubt cause for suspicion. But these days, Chinati's steady stream of visitors helps keep Marfa's economy afloat, and with the local unemployment rate hovering around 22 percent, that's of no small consequence.

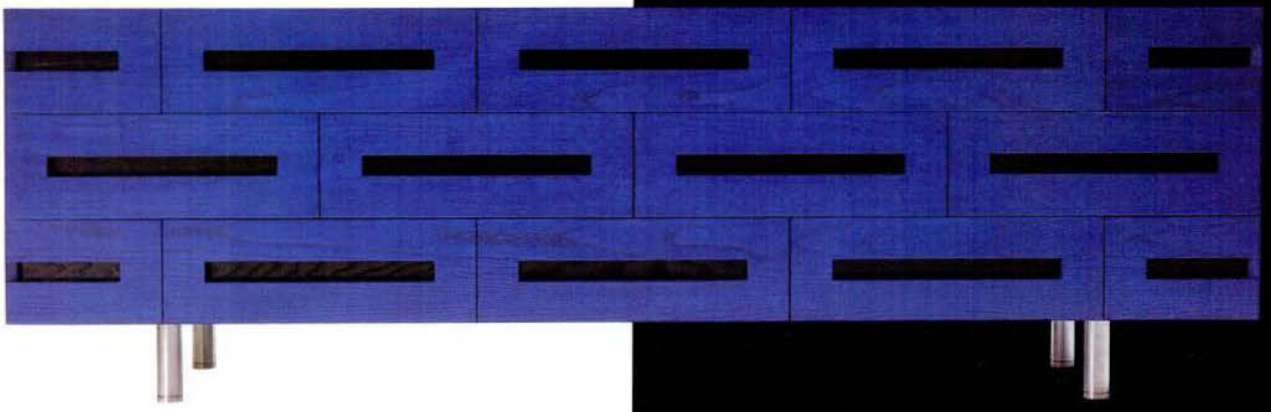
In the last few years, out of necessity but also in increasing recognition of the cool factor, Marfa has begun to fully embrace its status as an international art destination. On my last visit, I was surprised—but not that surprised—to see arugula salad and a '98 Syrah on the menu at Maiya's, a groovy new restaurant in the town center, filled that particular weekend with art-world hipsters in cowboy hats they'd picked up back in the East Village. Doctors and lawyers from Houston have begun buying up the abandoned adobe houses in the area and transforming them into upscale weekend getaways. The amiable Robert Halpern, editor and publisher of the *Big Bend Sentinel*, the region's local newspaper, has acquired an enviable art collection from Chinati's visiting artists and even commissions site-specific installations for the *Sentinel* headquarters. Last year he and his ▸




You can still buy bridles and feed in downtown Marfa (below), but you can also take a yoga class. The town's real draw is the artwork of Donald Judd (installation view of The Block, top photo) and colleagues like Dan Flavin, whose 1996 untitled (Marfa project) is shown in the lower photo.



# BRICK



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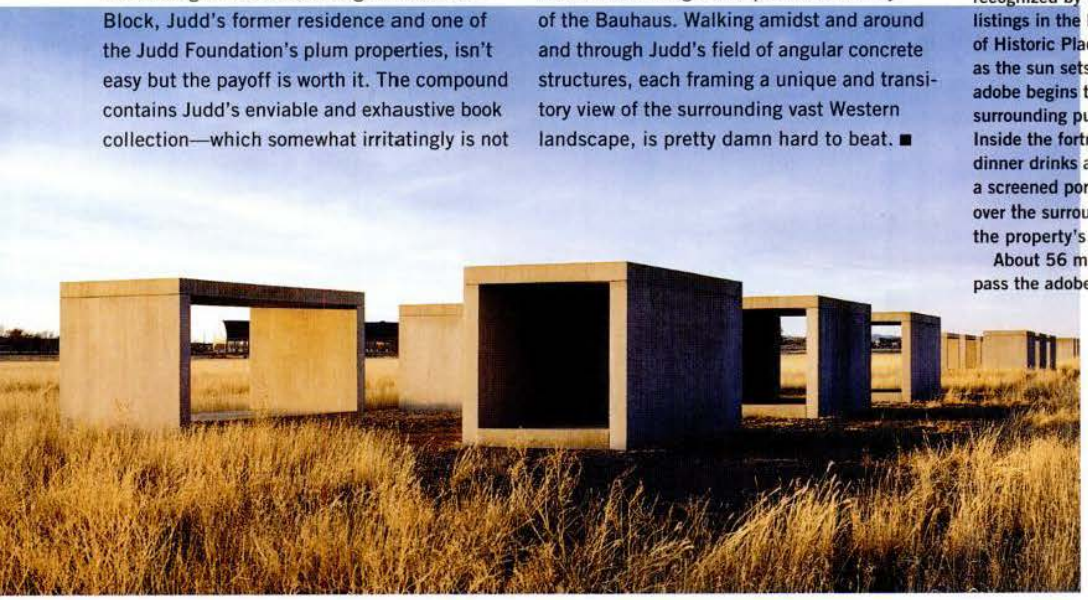
wife, Rosario Salgado Halpern, hired Los Angeles architects Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, who operate as Johnston Marklee & Associates, to build a sleek modernist home for their family overlooking the Davis mountains. Finally, as a true sign of contemporaneity, a yoga studio opened on North Highland Avenue last year.

It's hard to think of another personality who could attract a constant stream of art pilgrims seeking the sublime to a place whose biggest attraction used to be the Marfa's Mystery Lights—an *X-Files*-worthy local attraction consisting of mysterious glowing lights with no discernible source, first reported by rancher Robert Ellison in 1883. The town manages to sustain not one but two permanent foundations devoted to the preservation of Judd's oeuvre. The Chinati Foundation is run by Judd's former companion, Marianne Stockebrand, and consists of two rectangular Quonset-roofed buildings displaying 100 of the aforementioned polished-aluminum boxes and a series of dilapidated army buildings displaying more work by Judd and his favored colleagues: a fluorescent-light installation by Dan Flavin, poetic musings by Carl Andre displayed in vitrines, and the most sentimental of the lot, a semi-narrative installation by Russian artist Ilya Kabakov. John Chamberlain's signature smashed-car sculptures get their own building in town. There's also a rotating exhibition program featuring the work of Chinati's artists in residence.

As a provision in his will, Judd had set up his own organization, which his two children got off the ground after his death. The Judd Foundation is the smaller and less public of the two organizations. Getting in to see The Block, Judd's former residence and one of the Judd Foundation's plum properties, isn't easy but the payoff is worth it. The compound contains Judd's enviable and exhaustive book collection—which somewhat irritatingly is not available to scholars and remains untouched since Judd's passing in 1994—as well as a prime collection of the artist's furniture and sculptural works. The perfectly preserved living quarters, worthy of a Smithsonian diorama, are spare, Spartan, even, save for Judd's extensive collection of Native American jewelry, baskets, and blankets, and a bit of clutter in the kitchen.

People love to rally around the cause of art and controversy, as our nation's protracted NEA debate has illustrated, and the Marfa citizenry isn't shy about taking sides in the battle over Judd's legacy. Driving through town, you'll catch a glimpse of bumper stickers on passing Ford pickups that read "WWDJD?" (What Would Donald Judd Do?) and overhear gossip about the players while ordering a latte at the Marfa Book Co. Which side should you choose? Well, the Chinati Foundation offers regular admission, public programs and symposia, and a yearly open-house weekend that includes a free barbecue (and free beer!) for anyone who shows up (last year they fed about 1,000). The Judd Foundation spaces involve much pressing of noses against glass. UN weapons inspectors would have trouble getting in.

So why would you veer hours out of your way to visit this dusty cow town? The influence of Judd's cumulative creative production is indisputable. His deceptively simple geometric creations—in wood, aluminum, stainless steel—are impeccably crafted and visually mesmerizing. His rough-hewn furniture is an amazing study in materiality and craftsmanship, if not comfort. Though he was not a licensed architect, Judd's work is imbued with a rigor and precision worthy of the Bauhaus. Walking amidst and around and through Judd's field of angular concrete structures, each framing a unique and transitory view of the surrounding vast Western landscape, is pretty damn hard to beat. ■



## A Little Texas Hospitality

**The Spanish colonial Hotel Paisano, erected in 1930 and recently renovated, is your best bet for accommodations in Marfa. You'll sense the ghosts of movie stars as you enter the lobby—Warner Bros. headquartered the stars who were shooting *Giant* here. (Rooms start at $89.) But also consider two highly unique lodging options within an hour's drive. In Shafter, Texas, about 30 miles south toward the border and another seven or so miles down a dirt road, is Cibolo Creek Ranch, once a fortress, now an upscale resort offering spa treatments, horseback riding, and bird watching. (Rooms start at $350.) The restoration was done by San Antonio's Powell & Carson Architects in 1994, and was recognized by three separate listings in the National Register of Historic Places. Try to arrive as the sun sets and the rich adobe begins to mimic the surrounding purple mountains. Inside the fortress walls, pre-dinner drinks are served on a screened porch that looks out over the surrounding hills and the property's natural springs.**

**About 56 miles east—you'll pass the adobe mini-monument to the Marfa lights as you head out of town—is Marathon, Texas. If you blink, you'll miss it. The gateway to Big Bend National Park is, in essence, a three-block-long town with not much more than an antique shop, a photo gallery, a few gas stations, and Shirley's Burnt Biscuit Bakery, a cute little establishment with an endearing proprietor (Shirley) who makes fresh doughnuts and fried pie daily, starting at 5 a.m. One of those three blocks is given over to the historic Gage Hotel. (Rooms start at $69.) The rooms are Southwestern to the hilt (you'll find a pair of chaps and a horse's bridle hung in place of standard-issue hotel art) but in a manner that is utterly authentic. The grounds, resplendent with fountains, roses, and a swimming pool, are—all clichés aside—enchanting. I have never eaten as much meat in my life as I did in a week in Texas, and the best was at the Gage's restaurant, Café Cenizo. The pork tenderloin (served in a portion that I would present at a dinner party for six back home) was indescribably good. I wouldn't, however, recommend the goat. —A.A.**

Judd's 15 untitled works in concrete from 1980 to 1984 (left) can be seen at the Chinati Foundation. After a visit, you can stay overnight at the beautifully restored Cibolo Creek Ranch (above).

PHOTO BY FLORIAN HOLZHERR, 2002 (JUDD)

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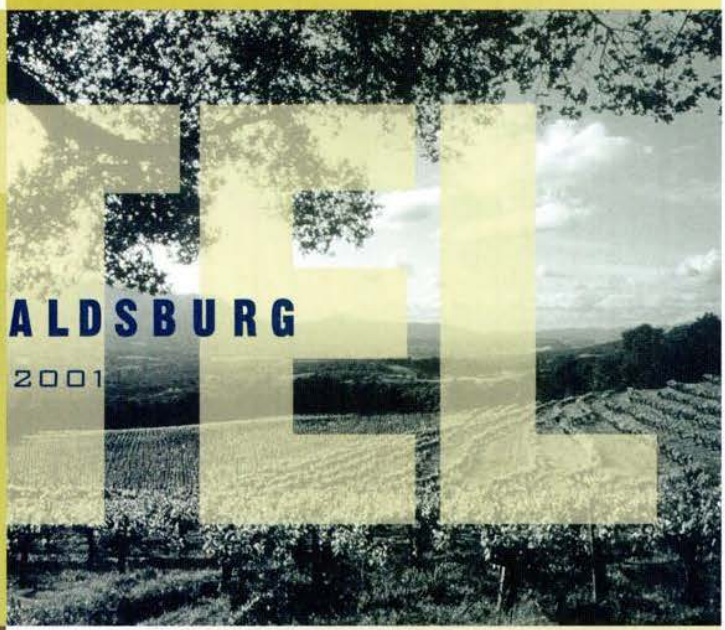

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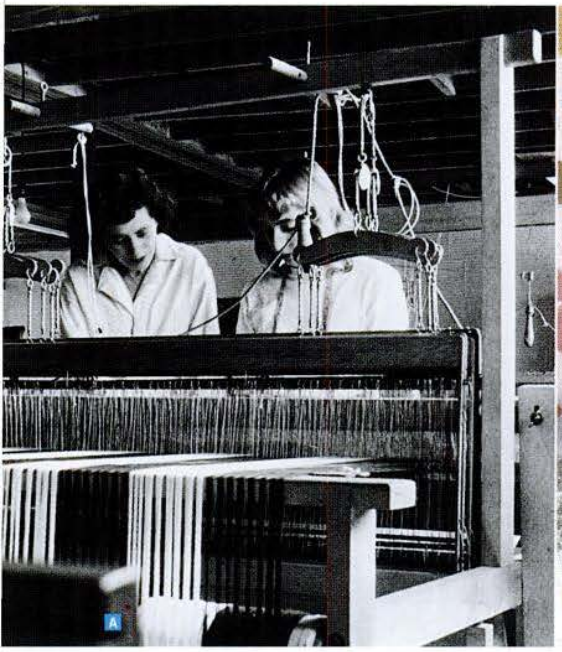

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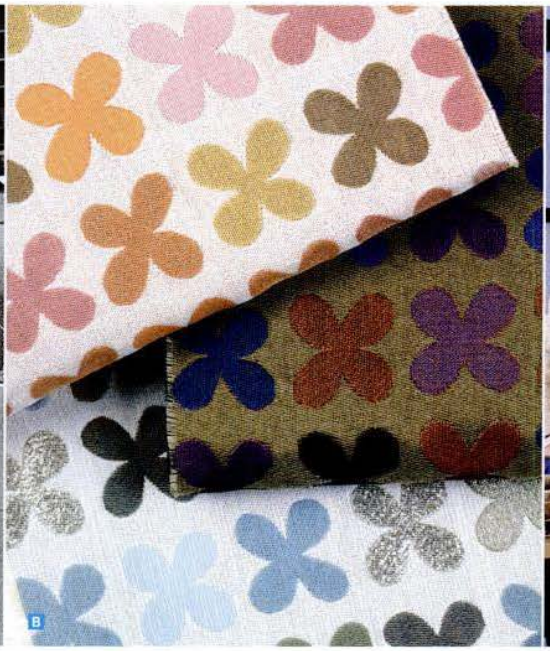

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# Uncommon Thread

Textiles are the guilty pleasure of every modernist. They are "soft" architecture that we experience feet first, that filter daylight, and provide the skin on the bones of our furniture. Their basic function has changed little since joining the trinity of food, shelter, and clothing. So what makes a textile modern?

In the 20th century, textiles became less of a costume than a complement to a room's structure. Textiles were to be liberated from the fringe (literally and figuratively) and brought into sync with industrial modes of production and an industrial aesthetic. Since the other modernist mantra was truth to materials, this meant that the memory of medieval tapestries, rugs, and tents remained floating in the textile unconscious.

The textiles we covet today are the offspring of these two parents—industry and craft. There have been many mixed marriages since that historic union, some even outside the religion altogether. But there are basic genetic traits that identify a contemporary fabric as a member of the extended family of modernism, be it the radical classicism of Mies, the hybrid informality of the Eameses, or Warholian Pop.

## The Industrial Textile

Consider a chenille-and-cellophane curtain. Last week's experiment with naturals and synthetics? Try last century's. It was A Anni Albers's thesis project at the Bauhaus in 1926. If the combination of naturals and synthetics still seems cutting-edge, that's because technology has finally caught up with Albers's ambitions.

For the better part of the last century, the discrepancy between studio and mass-production capabilities proved critical. It meant that the economies of the machine determined the aesthetic of commercial textiles. In fact, most of what we think of as classically modern textiles started life in the office.

Today, according to Suzanne Tick, creative director for KnollTextiles, the line between residential and contract textiles is rapidly disappearing. Consumers are finding commercial textiles more durable and sometimes more affordable. Visually, textiles like Knoll's luxurious patterned velvet upholstery defy categorization and, like Tick's own experiments with aluminum, vinyl, and raffia, rarely begin with a destination in mind.

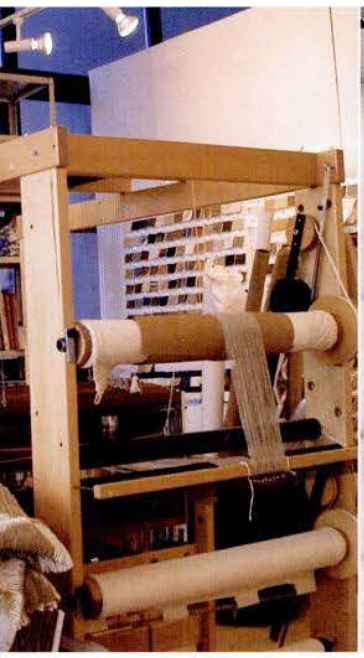
Maharam, originally a producer of theatrical curtains, is rooted in Broadway, not the Bauhaus, but the company has claimed adoption rights to a triad of modernists—classical, hybrid, and pop—with the work of designers such as Anni Albers, Alexander Girard B, and Verner Panton. The company continues to make design history through partnerships with innovators like Dutch designer Hella Jongerius. Their own design studio is changing the landscape of both home and office with technical textiles developed for seating and systems and fashion-inspired microfibers. Of course, the influence of the runway is not exclusive to Maharam, it's utterly pervasive. Missoni and Versace, to name just two, have recently staked their claim in the home-textiles market.

Clothing has always been at the center of the textile industry in Japan (where upholstery, rugs, and curtains had little place in traditional architecture). But since World War II, heavy government subsidy of manufacturing technology, matched with the craft traditions of centuries-old textile centers, has changed the picture. The most visible product of that synergy is Nuno, whose innovations with chemical burn-outs, rust dyes, and stainless steel and copper yarns have led to further experiments with biodegradable fibers and charcoal-based textiles with air-purifying elements. In contrast to the West, where scientific production methods produced an aesthetic of restraint, the science of Japanese textiles has been nothing less than revolutionary—like the difference between string theory and the Cartesian grid.

## The Crafted Textile

String theory would be a rather literal way of describing the 1960s and '70s fiber-art movement. Influenced by the postwar interest in Indian and Mexican crafts, the movement was an extension of the art world's interest in so-called primitive art decades

PHOTO BY JOSEF BREITENBACH / © THE JOSEF BREITENBACH TRUST, NY (ALBERS)



earlier. Fiber art may have failed to live up to its sculptural ambitions; its liberating influence on woven, knitted, and knotted textiles is still being played out. Contemporary enthusiasm for natural fibers, indigenous crafts, and the arts of embroidery and quilting is backed up by technology that now works collaboratively with the designer.

Today's computerized looms have finally caught up with the ideas and experiments of the great moderns like **Jack Lenor Larsen** C, making them accessible to a wider public. Architecturally commissioned pieces, like Larsen's aptly named *Continuum 2* (1967), are now being reissued.

The modernist craft revival has also engendered a more frankly feminine sensibility. You see it in the prevalence of intentionally crude running stitches on John Robshaw's window silks and in the simulated handwork in Donghia's upholstery jacquard *Sashiko.* If the craft textile is indebted to ancient traditions, Stephanie Odegard is repaying the loan in more ways than one. Her hand-knotted Nepalese rugs preserve local design without folk art sentimentality and, even more important, without engaging child labor. She reunites the first principles of modernism—the art of craft and the ambition of social change.

## The Pop Textile

Change has been the watchword for the baby-boom generation since the late '60s, when the critique of conformity erupted from beatnik black to the full spectrum of psychedelia. Pop and Op tweaked the gravitas of the International Style and an aesthetic of sobriety gave way to extreme pattern, inflated scale, and cool irony.

Decades of "irrational exuberance" may come and go, but irreverence and humor never go out of style—instead they become vital coping mechanisms. The pure strain of Pop can be found at Marimekko, for example, which has reissued Maija Isola's designs from 1957 to 1979.

Of course, a prime reference for the rug since the invention of the tapestry has been painting. Laurene Leon Boym and Constantin Boym go Tom Wesselman's nudes one better. Industrial designers with a subversive take on functionalism, they merge pillow and rug in the macraméd tresses of their *Aphrodite,* bringing a playful XXX rating back to the bedroom.

Collaborations between architects and textile designers confirm that the modern textile's future is still wedded to the future of architecture. From Lilly Reich's collaborations with Mies van der Rohe to **Petra Blaisse**'s with **Rem Koolhaas** D, the conversation continues. Blaisse may not have a product line, but I predict her ideas about scale and materials will be among the ones we live with tomorrow. The real pleasure of being modern is the pleasure of knowing design is an idea made real—not just another trend doomed to die another day.

## Tactile Texts

*Alexander Girard: Designs for Herman Miller* by Stanley Abercrombie and Leslie A. Pina (Schiffer Publishers, 2002). An American mid-century-modern classic.

*Anni Albers* by Nicholas Weber and Pandora Asbaghi (Abrams, 1999). The mother of all modern—textiles, that is.

*Art Deco and Modernist Carpets* by Susan Day (Chronicle Books, 2002). See how Picasso, Matisse, Poiret, Delaunay, and Gray did it first.

*Beyond Craft: The Art Fabric* by Mildred Constantine and Jack Lenor Larsen (Kodansha International, 1986, reissue). Important portrait of an era, with a useful history of the modern textile.

*Fabulous Fabrics of the 50s, and Other Terrific Textiles of the 20s, 30s, and 40s* by Gideon Bosker (Chronicle Books, 1992). The title says it all.

*Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles* by Cara McCarty and Matilda McQuaid (MoMA, 1999). Catalog for the seminal exhibition of Japanese avant-garde textiles by such innovators as Junichi Arai. Useful technical glossary.

*Textiles of the Wiener Werkstatte* by Angela Volker (Rizzoli, 1994). Herein lies modernism's recessive gene for decoration.

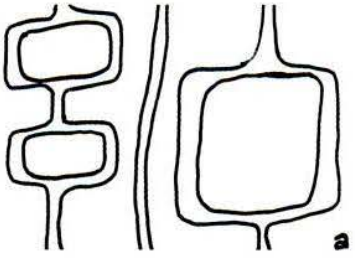
*20th-Century Pattern Design: Textile & Wallpaper Pioneers* by Leslie Jackson (Mitchell Beazley, 2002). A comprehensive survey, saturated with rich imagery, with a good discussion of the modern movement's abstraction of pattern.

## Textile Collections to Explore

Cincinnati Art Museum; Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum; Denver Art Museum; Chicago Art Institute; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, Antonio Ratti Center; M. H. de Young Museum; Rhode Island School of Design Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Design Center, Philadelphia University; The Fabric Workshop and Museum; The Textile Museum

# Talking to the Pros

**Angela Adams grew up on North Haven, an island 12 miles off the coast of Maine. She opened her own rug mill in 1998 and has since expanded her design business to include home furnishings and textiles.**



**One of the hallmarks of forward-looking design today is a deeper understanding of history. Which designers and artists inspire your work?**

To begin with, the rug didn't have to reinvent itself when modernism came along the way architecture did. Patterns and techniques may have simplified, but form and function have never strayed too far apart. In that sense, history is never far away. In my case, there is a particular rug-making tradition in Maine, not to mention an amazing natural landscape and a local culture with lots of continuity. So there are strong environmental influences as well as the inspiration I take from artists like Matisse, Marsden Hartley, and Ellsworth Kelly. Because I'm a colorist at heart, without any formal training in textiles, I see my work as essentially painting with wool.

**Would you say that there is a new level of permissiveness in commercial textiles, in the home and the office?**

There's definitely a stylistic permissiveness today. I'm equally inspired by Art Deco, mid-century modernism, and Chinese porcelain. Being modern now means being more informed, more synthetic. But the kind of permissiveness that I'm really interested in is the permission to relax. There's too much value placed on zooming around, and far too little value placed on calm, restful moments. Pure relaxation has become a rare delicacy. I think we all want comforting yet fresh design. Soulful, sensual textures and designs can both relax and inspire us. That's why I called one of my lines State of Mind: that ideal state where everything's in balance.

**Is there a direct relationship between your aesthetic and your medium?**

My sensibility is simple and organic. I'm not very technical, so I never try and make a meticulous design with perfect angles and edges. I'm much more comfortable with curves than with straight lines. I'm a doodler at heart; rugs are a great way for me to take my simple pattern designs and make them into something big and textural. A rug is like a canvas—in our case, a canvas hand-tufted with New Zealand wool. What's different is that it's not solitary like painting. Angela Adams is a total group effort. The people that make our rugs are skilled in a variety of trades and their input is invaluable. If it were just me in here every day, I'd be almost done with my very first rug about now. Our work depends on community and individuality; it's rooted in Maine but reaches out to a world of design ideas. It's as close to utopia as I can get.

**Mark Pollack founded his namesake company, Pollack, in 1987 after 11 years with Jack Lenor Larsen, Inc. as associate design director. Pollack is a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design.**

**Which designers and artists inspire your work?**

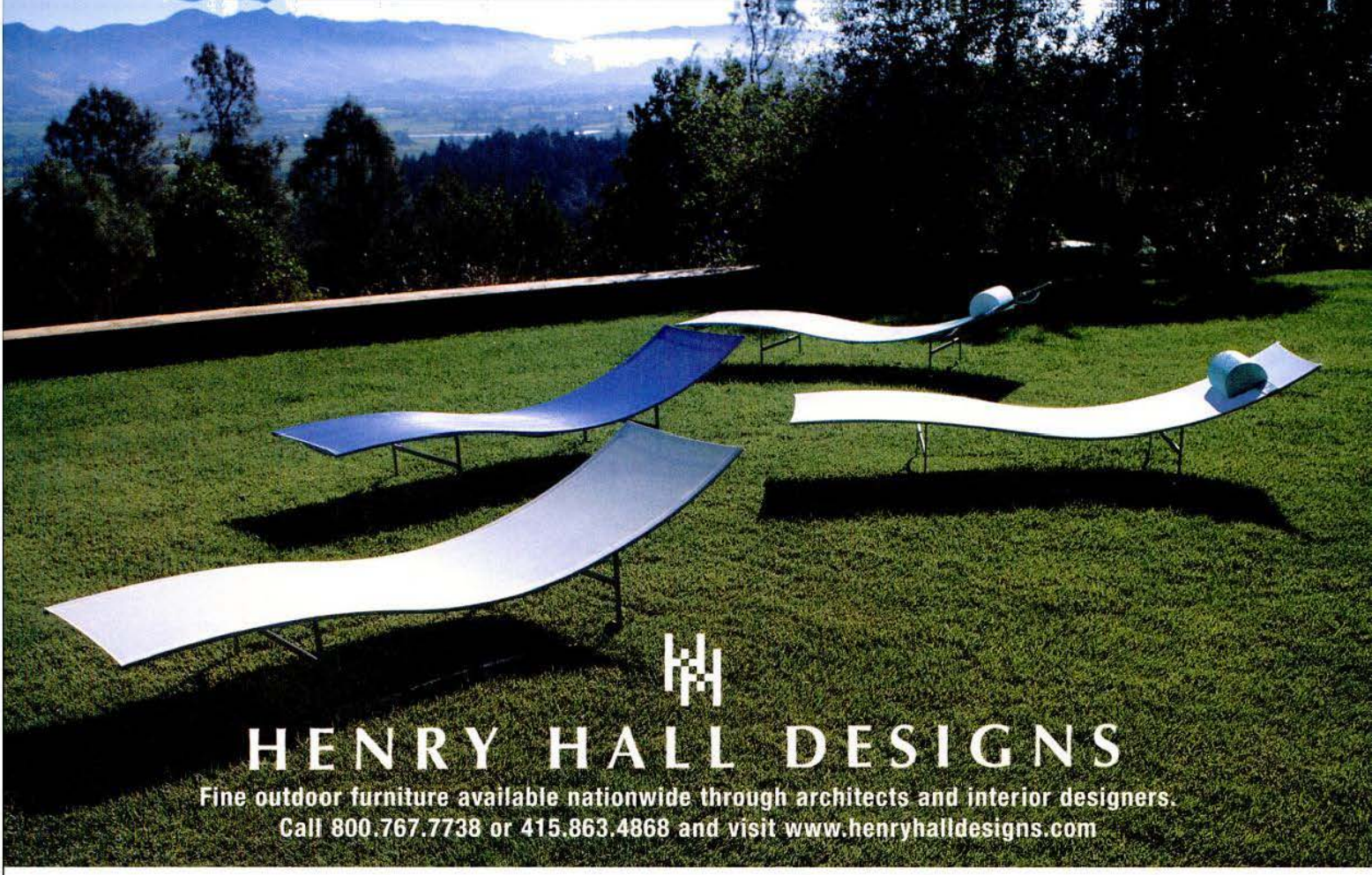
I usually say that I try not to consciously look, but that I have trained myself to see. Indeed, all sensory stimuli—the smell of linen, the touch of an exaggeratedly ribbed fabric, and the sound created when you drag your fingernail across it—offer one kind of inspiration. History affords another. At the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, our collection draws from the past without slavishly copying it. Today, my colleagues and I are especially attracted to the buttons, trims, and embroidery of RISD's historic costumes, as well as how they were constructed. If I had to name more contemporary touchstones, I would have to say Geoffrey Beene's clothes, Tom Nozkowski's paintings, and architecture from almost any era. Of course, a brisk early morning walk across the Brooklyn Bridge is an invaluable quick fix.

**What do you see as having the biggest influence on commercial textiles?**

Certainly the effects of globalization play a big part. Information and styles flash around the world at breakneck speed. Longevity has become outmoded. We no longer ask that our interiors last—they have become just as disposable as the rest of the fashion-driven world. The risk is that the special, the best, the unique can get lost in the global tidal wave. New design ideas are constantly in demand, but the process of generating them can entail more time than society will sometimes be willing to wait. This makes the good designer's job that much more difficult.

**What is the relationship between your aesthetic and your medium?**

For me, fabric design is not about the individual ingredients—pattern, color, construction, etc.—but rather how each element plays off the others and affects decisions throughout the design process. In the case of window fabrics, light is another element in the mix, lending depth and highlighting the architecture of the cloth. I choose fibers and yarns not only for their reflective capacity to bounce ambient light back into the room at night, but also for their silhouette in daylight. In all my work, structure is manipulated in the service of sensuality and practicality.




# Lounge in Unexpected Places

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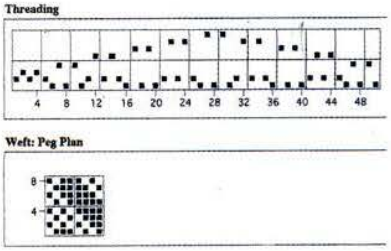
dwell AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD

DE LA ESPADA

Suzanne Tick established her company, Suzanne Tick, Inc., in 1995 after working for two notable textile houses. In 1997, she also took on the position of creative director of KnollTextiles and formed Tuva Looms with partner Terry Mowers.




**Who and what inspires your work?**
In terms of design history, the late Boris Kroll. He pushed and developed new constructions in a modernist aesthetic, without sacrificing quality. Also, Florence Knoll, for looking outside the common boundaries for innovative forms of manufacturing. In terms of art history, Picasso, Miró, and Gaudí—they're such magnificent colorists. In terms of place, Spain. Closer to home, my grandmother was a portrait painter and both my parents were artists and collectors. All of these influence my work, which, in the end, is all about weave structures and raw materials.

**Is there a new level of permissiveness in commercial textiles for home and office?**
We are seeing more and more contract product in the home and residential product in the office. The present-day commercial aesthetic is about texture, airiness, softness, not overly patterned—qualities people want in their homes. In this new crossover, you see a technical aesthetic involving metallics and vinyls moving into domestic settings. There's a looser spirit, with cleaner, clearer colors entering the office. Increasingly, textiles are being designed with both settings in mind. There's a more educated audience out there. IKEA, the Internet, shelter magazines, and cable TV have opened our views of global taste. On the practical side, people are finding that commercial products are easier to clean, can last longer, and are less expensive than most residential fabrics.

**Is there a direct relationship between your aesthetic and your medium?**
Upholstery fabrics get a real workout, so there's definitely a practical advantage to my attraction to textures and finishes. I love to invent new constructions, to develop new yarns out of materials like stainless steel that play with luster, and to create hybrids of fibers and other materials. *Imago* is probably the best example, though it's not an upholstery fabric. Here we embedded fabric in sheets of resin and imprinted the texture of the fabric on the surface, creating a structural textile that works as room divider as well as a table surface. Like all my work, *Imago* is about the beauty of materials and how they go together in an environment.


# Today's Tactile Textiles

Here are the strong suits of some of the most compelling designers and manufacturers in the field. The common denominators? A strong relationship to architectural values, a keen appreciation for the sensuality of fabrics, and creative elaborations on the evolving idea of what it means to be modern.

## Rugs

**A M&M Design International** Men's fashion designer Gene Meyer reprises Op pattern with a Miami Beach palette. Shown: *GM101*, Nepalese wool. www.mandmgallery.com

**B Tufenkian Tibetan Carpets** Interior designer Kevin Walz underscores syncopated stripes with subtle painterly affects. Shown: *Stripe Rag Royal*, Tibetan hand-knotted wool. www.tufenkiancarpets.com

**C Endless Knot Rug Company** Inspired by Buddhist myths, Lori Weitzner synthesizes two opposing traditions into one thoroughly contemporary rug. Shown: *Nanda*, hand-knotted wool, silk. www.endlessknotrugs.com

**D Odegard, Inc.** Odegard preserves local craft traditions without using child labor. Shown: *Rectangles*, Southeast Asian hand-knotted hemp. www.odegardinc.com

**E Fort Street Studio** Artists Brad Davis and Janis Provisor transform their original watercolors into luminous silk carpets. Shown: *Checkerboard*, hand-knotted Dandong Chinese silk. www.fortstreetstudio.com

PHOTO BY AYA BRACKETT (RUGS)

dwell

AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD

# Are You a Nice Modernist?

## Join the Dwell Community Reader Panel and let us know.

You will receive emails about hot new products, cool events, must-see exhibits, as well as surveys asking your opinion on what really matters in the modern world.

Join at www.dwellmag.com

Photos by Aya Brackett

## Upholstery

**A Hella Jongerius for Maharam** Jongerius's Repeat Dot reminds us that collage is a modernist invention. Shown: *Repeat Dot*, woven cotton, polyester, rayon. www.maharam.com

**B Carnegie** True industrial modernists, Carnegie infuse a classic solid cotton with sparks of light with their trademark Xorel monofilament. Shown: *Fling*, cotton, Xorel, polyester. www.carnegiefabrics.com

**C Castel** Unspun yarn lends a softness and subtle surface variation to Castel's elegant woven duo-tone fabric. Shown: *Kenu*, cotton, viscose. www.castelmaison.com

**D Knoll** Knoll bridges the distance between your closet and your chair with an upholstery fabric that looks and feels like an elegant bouclé. Shown: *In the Loop*, woven wool, rayon, nylon. www.knolltextiles.com

**E Donghia Furniture/Textiles Ltd.** Modernism's dictum of simplicity finds its doppelganger in folk art adaptations like this one influenced by Japan. Shown: *Sashiko*, woven cotton linen. www.donghia.com


How does a good modernist come to terms with the embarrassment of riches that textile designers have laid at our doors (and windows and floors)? Rationalize it in a grid and be highly selective.

## Window Fabrics

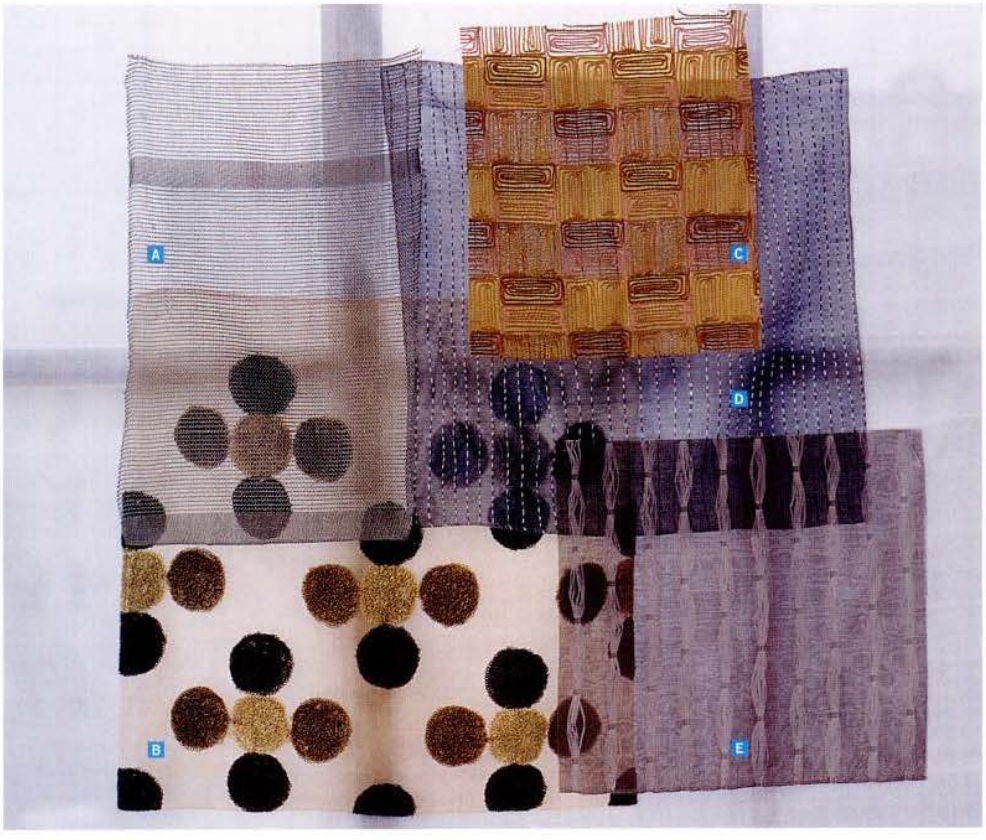
**A Larsen Textiles** Larsen's modern openwork mixes memories of chain mail, lace, and steel curtains. Shown: *Apollo*, woven silver plated nylon.

**B Zimmer + Rohde** Zimmer + Rohde's looped embroidery on a silk sheer triggers unadulterated material lust. Shown: *Circle*, silk. www.zr-group.com

**C Bart Halpern** Change the lighting on Bart Halpern's fabrics, and glowing fields of color become chain-stitched line drawings of concentric patterns. Shown: *Window Pane*, silk. info@barthalpern.com

**D John Robshaw Textiles** Modernist superego meets decorative subconscious in Robshaw's running-stitch pinstripe. Shown: *JRRSS 06*, woven silk. Call for info: 212-594-6006

**E Nuno** At Nuno, avant-garde fashion + laboratory science = extreme textiles. Shown: *Feather Flurries*, silk with feathers. www.nuno.com



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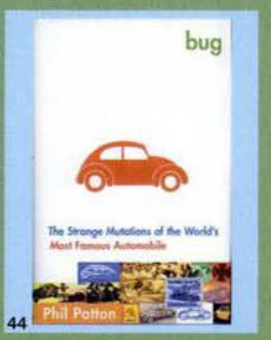




### 37 My House

**Work Architecture + Design**
**Rachael Gray**
New York, NY
www.workad.com
**Corian**
www.corian.com

### 40 Off the Grid

***Werner Sobek: Art of Engineering***
By Werner Blaser
(Birkhauser Architectural Press, 1999)
www.stoutbooks.com
**GlasFischer**
www.fischerglas.de
**Chairs by Le Corbusier and Marcel Breuer**
www.designwithinreach.com

### 44 Dwell Reports

***Bug: The Strange Mutations of the World's Most Famous Automobile***
By Phil Patton
(Simon & Schuster, 2002)
www.amazon.com
**Ford MA**
www.ford.com
***Retrofuturism: The Car Design of J Mays*** by Brooke Hodge
(Museum of Contemporary Art/Universe Publishing, 2002)
www.moca.org/jmays
**Toyota pod**
www.toyota.com
**Volvo Safety Concept Car**
www.conceptlabvolvo.com
**GM Hy-wire**
www.gm.com
**Volkswagen Microbus**
www.vw.com/concept

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### 50 Elsewhere

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**Miniloftmitte**
www.miniloft.com

### 54 What We Saw

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**Konstantin Grcic**
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**Cinal by Cinal**
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**Styrene by Paul Cocksedge**
www.PaulCocksedge.co.uk

### 62 Invention

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### 64 Archive

**Buhrich house info**
www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

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**Black slate countertops and desktops by Structural Slate Co.**
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### 102 Tomorrow Now

***Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next Fifty Years***
By Bruce Sterling
(Random House, 2002)
***The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium: American Culture on the Brink***
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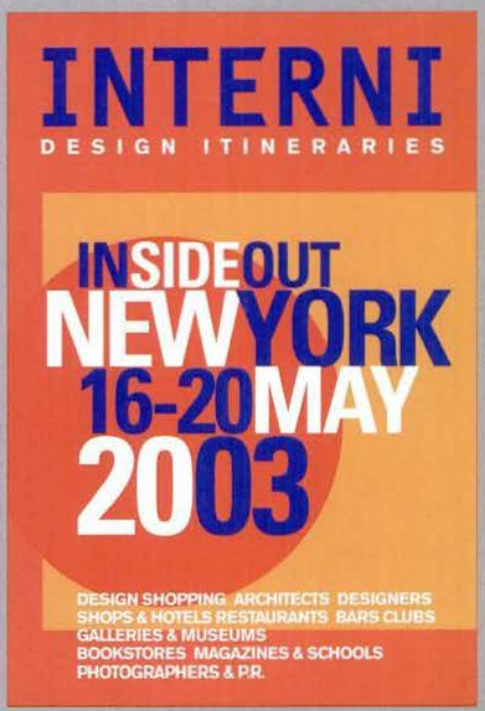


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The complete guide: where to find Contemporary Design during the ICFF, 16-20 May.
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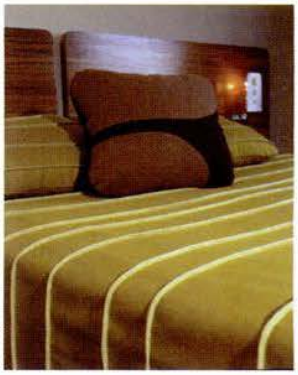

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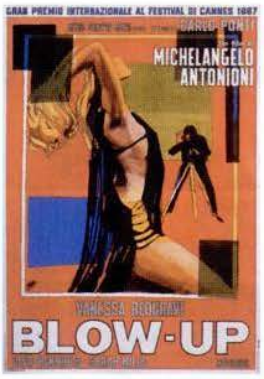


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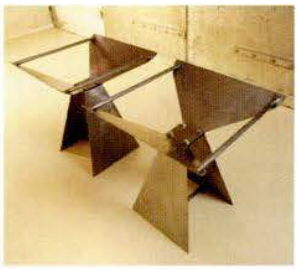

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Story by Virginia Gardiner

Photo by Julie Flohr / Garofalo Architects

# It's Not Hip to Be Square

**When distinguished blob architects shuffle into a** room, developers dutifully approach them, digiphiles drool in awe, and the snide chortle at how passé the blob is getting. But, the Experience Music Project aside, the blob as we know it isn't quite passé—it's brilliantly morphing into something better. (Suggestions for new and improved terminology are more than welcome.)

Last winter, in Spring Prairie, Wisconsin, Garofalo Architects completed their latest digital-technology renovation. The clients, art collectors from Chicago, had purchased a 2,500-square-foot, barnlike house on 75 rolling acres outside a one-horse town. A year later, they hired Douglas Garofalo and project architect Julie Flohr to extend the kitchen, add a couple of bedrooms, and redesign existing features such as the main stair and hearth. As a result, the rural Midwestern house acquired 1,000 additional square feet, and the best visual juxtaposition to date of vermilion and titanium.

Digital architecture's flamboyant capacity for curves has embodied a kind of empowerment since its conception in the 1980s, and it still does. Flohr, 29, describes a vision she developed in graduate school at U.C.L.A., which the Spring Prairie house brought to tangible fruition: "Architecture, engineering, and design should be integrated. For a long time, the architect had to sacrifice control of structure and fabrication. The computer enables a renaissance by reversing that predicament. The architect is back at the center of command."

Now past its pampered youth, the blob's transformation reflects a kind of maturity, in its increased courageousness to embrace contrast. When they asked for the radical extension at the house's rear quarters, hardly visible from the traditional "Wisconsin" approach at the front of the house, the clients expected to startle themselves on every visit. But on the first weekend there, they found a better surprise: The rectilinear house, with its rounded 21st-century growths, immediately seemed natural. The high-tech steel-framed curves had seamlessly undulated onto and into the iconic mundane squareness of a barn. The art collectors were delighted, claiming they had been "liberated from the tyranny of the rectangle." ■